

WHAT IS CIVILIZATION?



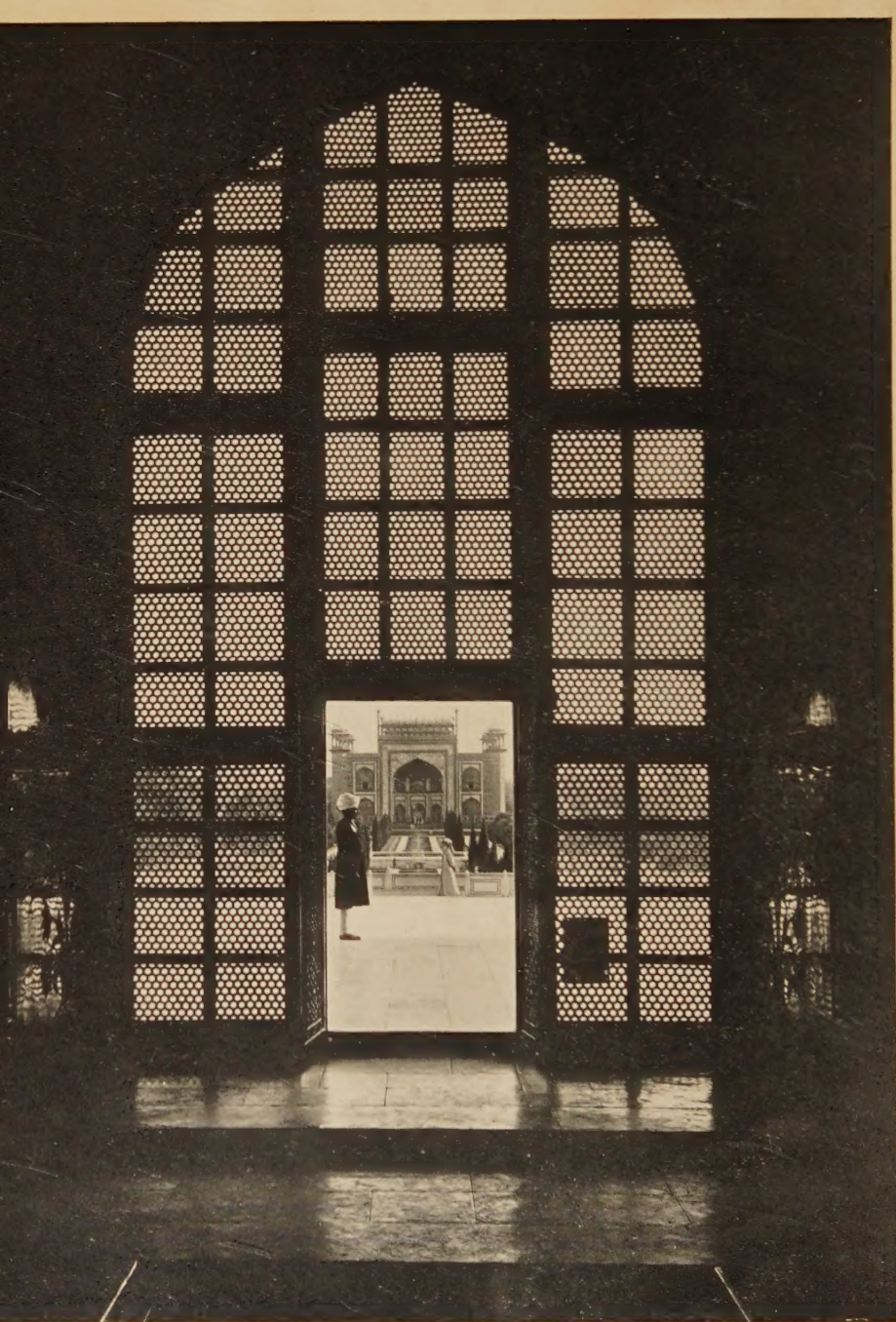
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WHAT IS
CIVILIZATION?



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A DOORWAY IN INDIA

WHAT IS CIVILIZATION?

By
Maurice Maeterlinck, Dhan Gopal Mukerji
and others

With an Introduction by
Hendrik Van Loon



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WHAT is civilization? Is it railroads, telegraphs, skyscrapers, and open plumbing? Is it the conquest of the air and of disease? Is it literature and art, philosophy and religion, the superlative excellence of the few, or the greatest good of the greatest numbers?

In this age of vast material progress, too many of us are prone to limit our definition of civilization by the very prejudices born of our own particular type of culture. We Americans, especially, are apt to regard civilization in terms of our mechanistic achievements, and to look down pityingly from the altitude of our progress to the backwardness of other times and peoples. To-day this attitude is being challenged by many writers, who bid us look to other cultures and see what we can learn from them. In the brilliant kaleidoscope of history many diverse civilizations have flashed and faded. According to these writers, each one has contributed something to the great wealth of culture of which we of today are the heirs and beneficiaries. In the pages which follow, various authors present what they consider the essentials of the cultures of those other races, nations, and epochs which have done, or which are doing, their share toward moulding the world civilization we may some day achieve.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

THE *Civilization* discussion issued from the office of "The Forum" magazine, in whose pages a majority of these articles first appeared and attracted wide attention. The present publisher has added to them. Although in most cases introduction is superfluous, the following contributors are briefly catalogued:

Hendrik Willem Van Loon is the author of "The Story of Mankind."

E. P. Dutton & Co. published "My Brother's Face" and several other volumes by the East Indian, Dhan Gopal Mukerji.

As editor of "The Crisis," organ of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, is one of the leaders of his race.

The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, when finished, will be a monument to its architect, Ralph Adams Cram.

Paul Shorey is Professor of Classical Philology at the University of Chicago.

The Chinese scholar, Chi-Fung Liu, is at present representing his country at Columbia University.

Once upon a time Maurice Maeterlinck, Belgian poet and philosopher, wrote "The Life of the Bee."

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Herbert Joseph Spinden, scholar and archaeologist, has recently gained new fame on an expedition unearthing ancient history in Yucatan.

Ramsay Traquair, who has slain with an analyst's knife most of the things we had supposed eternally feminine, is head of the department of architecture at McGill University, Montreal.

Elizabeth Robins Pennell, well-known authoress in her own name and co-authoress with her husband, resides in Brooklyn—which may account for her attitude toward the subway.

The decorations are reprinted through the courtesy of the Forum Magazine.

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What is Civilization?

INTRODUCTION

HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON

THE dictionary is a convenient tuning-fork. Therefore I take up the Concise Oxford and turn to "civilization." And this is what the little volume tells me: "civilization, n. Making or becoming civilized; stage, esp. advanced stage, in social development; civilized States."

So far so good, but alas! this does not go very far. And I try my luck with the next paragraph and read: "civilize, v. t. Bring out of barbarism, enlighten, refine; c. away, get rid of (barbarous habits, etc.) Hence *civilizable* a., *civilizer* n. (f.F. *civiliser*, see *Civil.*)"

Even that does not quite seem to cover the case. Wherefore I double back upon my tracks and examine the definition of the parent word, "civil."

But once more I am disappointed.

I am informed that "civil institutions" are neither "naval" nor "military" institutions nor yet "ecclesiastical," but it does not tell

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me what I want to know most of all, the intrinsic difference between a "civilized" human being and an "uncivilized" one.

There is apparently only one way out of the difficulty. I must take the entire body of revealed history. I must examine it carefully—even though I devote the next forty years to a single introduction—and then perhaps I shall be able to discover a definition that covers the case.

* * * * *

It would of course be possible to draw heavily upon the profound tomes of Guizot and Buckle and Kidd and Lippert and Kurth and to talk learnedly of "lower" and "middle periods" of savagery and to discourse upon the difference between savagery and barbarism. But that would bring me sharply back to the inevitable "second" and the "upper" periods of civilization and once more I would find myself in the cul-de-sac of that first paragraph—what really is civilization?

* * * * *

Until a dozen years ago the answer was quite simple. The early part of the twentieth century was an era of profound spiritual contentment. We seemed to be out of the woods. War and pestilence had come to an end. Pov-

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erty, unfortunately, still dodged our footsteps. But economists and sociologists were supposed to be working on a plan to do away with hunger. And as soon as they had discovered a radical cure (and laboratories and a few millions of endowments would inevitably surrender the secrets of all natural afflictions from measles to thirst) as soon as they had given us the formula for this age-old malady, there would be an amendment to the constitution or an act of parliament and poverty would be exterminated, just as the smallpox and diphtheria had been exterminated a short while before.

All this was very delightful and it allowed us to play tennis and sail around the world collecting butterflies and to speak with an air of condescension about our semi-barbarous ancestors who had thought the Emperor Napoleon a great man and who had given their lives for a Nero or a Philip of Spain.

How the Gods in their wrath punished us for our pride I need not repeat in detail. Those who are interested in the subject are respectfully referred to the newspaper-files of the last twelve years.

The others will derive more consolation from the current historical literature. For the historian has learned his lesson.

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At last he has turned over a new page. "The senseless list of battles that goes by the name of history" is an outworn although highly popular myth.

Nowadays when an historian mentions the battle of Waterloo or the encounter of Hastings he does so with an apology and an explanation.

What really interests him and puzzles him and keeps him busy is the profound question, "What was it all about? And is it possible for the human race to get beyond a certain point of civilization without writing its own sentence of doom?"

These are not cheerful questions in the accepted sense of the word. But to those who regard existence as something inevitable and who therefore accept it as it is and not as they think that it ought to be, the fatal swinging of the human pendulum means nothing more serious than the reoccurrence of the tides or the seasons, something that is part and parcel of the business of living, slightly upsetting in its brutal and sudden consequences, but by no means fatal, a necessary experience in the endless cycle of Divine Change.

* * * * *

It is always a little difficult to write of these things in our own country. As a nation we are

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as optimistic as children. All of life is still before us. A week is ten years long. And every day brings its full measure of new experiences and discoveries.

Whisper that Brooklyn Bridge may some day inspire a Thibetan archeologist to write a learned treatise upon "the probable meaning of double-arched portals erected in the midst of a salt-water lake" and you will be taken for a mild lunatic. Let it be known that in your opinion the very speed with which American ideals have conquered the world will bring about its collapse in less than four hundred years, and forthwith you stand revealed as a dangerous character, a man tainted with the pessimism of the Moscovite steppes.

And confess yourself an adherent of the school of thought which sees in all succeeding forms of civilization a merely temporary manifestation of racial genius to be followed by lethargy and death, and the next thing will be a warrant for your immediate arrest and subsequent exile.

Of course the Greeks and the Romans and the Turks and the Manchus and the Mayas, in their heyday of power, reasoned just as we do to-day. And perhaps it is just as well that the

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masses should press forward gaily singing "Excelsior."

But a few of us have to stand by the side of the road to contemplate the landscape that stretches behind and study the mountain ridges that lie ahead.

We may not be able to give guidance to the big parade that pushes past us with such vigor and energy. But at least we shall know whence we came and we shall be able to guess whither we are going. And that by itself is no mean consolation.

* * * * *

After all, what is civilization?

We all know what it is not.

It is not an accumulation of material things. It is not wealth. It is not gold and the profound respect of the paying-teller. It is not military glory or the possession of vast colonial domains. It has little to do with mere book-learning and one can be a tremendous scientist and remain as uncivilized as a baboon.

Rapid means of transportation, railroads, viaducts and docks and aeroplane hangars have as little to do with civilized existence as a favorable trade balance in pig-iron or telegraph poles.

In short, all these many things which to the

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average citizen spell c-i-v-i-l-i-z-a-t-i-o-n mean just about as much as an old derby on the head of the Congo savage or a phonograph in a Greenland igloo.

For civilization is essentially a question of the inner spirit. It is, of course, very nice if the stage of life has been well set, if the theater is not too draughty, if the seats are comfortable, the stage-hands well paid and contented, the dressing-rooms comfortable. All those incidental details will contribute to the physical well-being of the performers and in turn they will affect the performance itself. But the success or the failure of the play will in the last analysis depend upon certain invisible qualities without which the entertainment will be merely a waste of time and money on the part of the audience and the managers.

Remains to discover what those "invisible qualities" are and presto! the problem will be solved.

But there is the rub.

That mysterious ingredient does not allow itself to be classified.

It is like salt, which, according to an erudite philosopher is "something which you taste when it is not there."

And while we may not know definitely what

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civilization is, we never fail to notice the lack of it.

That is more or less of a negative achievement but it may help us to discover what civilization really is or ought to be.

* * * * *

The following suggestion is a personal one. But having lived in all sorts of lands under all sorts of governments, climates and economic conditions, it seems to me that the highest civilization is that form of society which allows the greatest number of people to show the greatest amount of consideration for the physical happiness and spiritual comfort of the largest number of their neighbors.

This goes a little further than the well-known ideal of the eighteenth century, which insisted upon, "the greatest good to the greatest number." For that slogan (although it was a direct improvement upon the policy which during the previous thousand years had allowed one class of society to live in almost perfect contentment at the expense of ninety-nine per cent. of their neighbors) was still a little too material to cover the case.

It left too many loop-holes for bricklayers in flivvers and cloak-and-suit peddlers in imitation

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palaces of the Florentine-Bronxville renaissance.

It paid too much deference to "things" and not quite enough to the "spirit of things."

And while it insisted that more people than ever before be provided with suitable hours of leisure, it failed to say what they were supposed to do with this unexpected gift. And instead of increasing the sum total of civilization, it brought about an imprisonment of the soul the like of which the world has not seen since the days of Attila when dirty little yellow men waddled proudly through the charred ruins of an Italian villa and roasted large slabs of horse-meat over a bonfire of Roman classics.

* * * * *

This is an era of rivalry. The war, that strange racial eruption which took place at the very eve of the supposed brotherhood of man, has made many ancient nations conscious of their almost forgotten past. They now press forward with their claims. They prove to us (at least they try to prove to us) that their ancestral contributions to the cause of civilization surpass those of any other people. Large groups acting as the representatives of vast ethnological entities clamor to be heard on behalf of their own candidates for supreme honor.

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Here and there an entire continent enters the race and proudly points to achievements that date back to the age of neolithic man.

The combat is on.

Who will get the prize?

* * * * *

Once more I find myself obliged to repeat what I have frequently said before, that contrary to the generally accepted belief we are not "modern" people, that we are not heirs to the glories of a noble past, but that we are the last off-shoot of prehistoric man and that civilization in the true sense of the word has not even begun.

This may not be flattering to our pride but it will prove a mighty incentive to our labors for the future of mankind.

What we have regarded as civilization thus far, the so-called "civilization of the Greeks," the much over-rated "civilization of the Egyptians," the mysterious "civilization of the Chinese," all the hundred and one short-lived "civilizations" of Asia and Africa and Europe and Central America, they were one and all momentary flashes in Clio's trusted melting-pot. They could not possibly expect to endure because the conditions necessary for their continued existence were not present in the right

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proportion and because that inter-action of divergent forces without which no cultural system can reach a perfect balance did not last for a sufficient number of years.

But during the last half century man had acquired such mastery over nature that the inanimate world is practically at his mercy. In the first flash of success he is apt to make the old and familiar mistake of all those who have fought a long and brave fight—he is a little too much inclined to regard his victory as an end by itself.

It will take him some time to learn that a mere physical triumph without a corresponding spiritual equivalent is of just as little value as a newly established record for saxophone tooting or jazz dancing.

And because the most intelligent members of the species are undoubtedly possessed of a very definite ability for logical thinking, the mammals who have learned to walk on their hind-legs are bound to forge ahead. For standing still would mean retrogression and no living creature is willing to accept defeat and ultimate extinction without a final and all-over-powering struggle.

And that is perhaps the only useful thing the

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recent war has done. It has acted as a warning that the majority of our contemporaries are still pre-eminently people of the late stone age and that it is time to revise our whole attitude towards life or run the risk of being exterminated by some such humble creature as the tent-caterpillar who will use the absence of the necessary man-power in our fields to eat us out of house and home.

The war has acted as a warning.

We may not yet know what we are going to do next, but we are seriously taking stock.

* * * * *

Just as history never quite repeats itself (being a record of that most unstable of all instruments of precision, the human mind) so civilization will never repeat itself either.

We can't become Greeks by wearing sandals and discoursing upon Einstein underneath the shady pillars of the Elevated—we can't proclaim ourselves substitute Egyptians by erecting a couple of pyramids and provoking the Hudson River into an occasional flood. And all the flute playing in the world will not change us into the modern equivalent of Confucius.

But we can at least try to learn wherein our predecessors failed.

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Such knowledge will not save us from committing some ghastly errors of our own. At the same time it will give us fresh courage to continue where they left off. Eventually this obscure little planet will go the way of all others. But ere that happens, we shall have a couple of billion years in which to try to make this world a truly pleasant place of abode, and one which fulfills the definition of civilization which I suggested a few pages back.

Material consideration will have a great deal to do with such a development. But the problem of food and shelter which confronted and puzzled our ancestors, until in sheer despair they reverted to revolution, is no longer a menace to society. A few thousand years of intelligent management and they shall have ceased to exist.

Then follows the part of our task which is infinitely more difficult, the re-arrangement of our spiritual values. And there we can borrow from our neighbors.

It is all very fine to talk about an original form of civilization, but I have never yet been able to discover one. Even our own cultural life which we call "American" is the product of some sixty ethnological groups who were brought together from every corner of the

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earth, who converse with each other in a dialect composed of Roman, Celtic, Saxon and French elements, who live according to a political system that was originated in Greece, who accept an ethical law devised by a tribe of wandering Semitic shepherds, who count their profits in queer little pot-hooks imported from India, who correspond with each other with the help of a Phoenician alphabet, who cook their food as the French cooks of Louis XIV taught them to do, who wear clothes that date back to every century between the year 700 and 1900—in short, who have nothing absolutely American about them except the soil which they plow (with the help of a neolithic instrument) and the climate which they study with the assistance of certain data bestowed upon them by the contemporaries of King Tut.

No, when it comes to a new civilization, that shall suit this strangely assorted mass of humanity, we need not be shy about borrowing. But before all things, we should not hesitate to discard.

For the future depends much more upon that which we shall throw over-board as futile, non-essential and harmful, than upon those elements which we intend to retain.

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The chance of war has given us an opportunity to begin afresh.

May the Lord have mercy upon us if we choose wrong once more.

HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON.

THE ANSWER OF INDIA

CHAPTER I

THE ANSWER OF INDIA

DHAN GOPAL MUKERJI

WHEN I revisited my country recently, after an absence of nearly thirteen years, I found such a change in the unchanging East that it hurt and shocked my spirit. That India, like the Western world, would fall victim to the illusion of Progress had never entered my mind. So I was deeply pained to see taxicabs and Ford trucks in large numbers where I was used to seeing bullock-carts, horse-drawn vehicles, and a few elephants. And how ugly and unsubstantial modern progress looks can be gauged by this picture: a second-hand truck standing near an elephant eighty years old. In spite of its utter ugliness and ephemeral nature, that symbol of Progress—the truck—has run the pachyderm out of business, if not out of existence. Little children, nowadays, do not play *Hathi* (elephant) as we used to. Instead they play Motor Cars. Even as a toy the elephant has had to take its departure.

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Along with that sumptuous beast of burden something more valuable has departed: our old unconsciousness of ourselves, and a great part of our poetic speech. At present the Hindu youths are extremely conscious of their place in world-life and of the place of India in the community of nations. About a quarter of a century ago nobody cared anything for such matters. Also a man was never afraid of inaccuracy in speech as long as it was shot through and through with imagery and color.

One of the horrible examples of correct and unpoetic speech to which I had to listen was in the company of an American writer who was visiting my country. He was eager to study everything that savored of material for his book on India in Revolt. There is no doubt that this American was suffering from what might be called a contribution complex. He was pumping everybody about "What has India contributed to Science and Art?" "Since Rome has contributed Law and Justice," this lean, lanky, Roman-nosed, blue-eyed literary man averred, "Britain, Liberty, and France, the French Revolution, each one of them has justified her existence at the Bar of History. Now tell me what has India contributed?"

Well, I, who believe that everything exists

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simply because it has been born, had no answer for him. So one rainy day he and I set out in quest of a monastery where some young men from the Benares Hindu University were in the habit of meeting. A very quiet old holy man, who loved the young intellectuals, offered them his place and never minded their criticism of his religion. They all talked about one thing: namely, that India has contributed so many things to the sum total of world-culture. It was toward their little group that rainy afternoon that I piloted my friend.

It is not easy to find one's way about in Benares where streets are not named nor houses numbered. We wandered about from lane to lane, snaking our way between palaces and hovels, red, yellow, brown, and white. Every now and then I asked a passer-by, "Where dwell the lotus-feet of the blessed Swami, whose holiness like the fragrance of flowers has called out souls like the bees?" I never translated that for my American friend.

At last we reached the brown cottage of the holy one on the river bank. By now it was about half-past three. Fortunately the sky had cleared considerably. The cloud-cleansed, rain-swept heavens, as we say in our tongue, now gleamed like a peacock's throat. A pang of de-

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light went through one on coming upon those glittering spaces into which the turgid Ganges plunged like tawny lions hurtling down the emerald slopes of the Himalayas.

We stood on the granite front porch of the monastery and looked to our right: temple after temple and ghaut after ghaut, red, yellow, and brown, running along the river as far as the eye could see.

Now it was late, yet because the sun shone to witness their acts of piety, troupe after troupe of pilgrims, dressed in cerise, gold, purple, and green, began to go up and down the hard stone steps of the ghauts weaving audacious patterns of ravishing lines and colors. Those colors crashed and disappeared momentarily in the tawny Ganges as the wearers took their dips. When each pilgrim rose to go the wet garb clung to his body almost dripping with blue, orange, olive, amber, and turquoise. Here was a woman who had already finished her bath and was walking off in a wet clinging cerise dress, over which she threw a blue cashmere shawl as she vanished in a narrow lane of white houses.

It would have been wonderful to stand there forever and watch that pageant before us. But since we had come to discuss other matters, we went to the ghaut of the monastery near-by

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whence the noise of a speech was reaching us. As we drew nearer to it, we found that, owing to the rain, just one young white-robed, oval-faced University don had come up the river to preach at the Swami. The latter, an old man of five and sixty, was dressed in the orange-yellow robe of a monk. His round and shaven face glowed with perfect certainty. There was no room for doubt in those coal-black eyes, the prominent forehead, full lips, almost hard corners of the mouth, and that pugnacious strong chin. He squatted cross-legged facing the professor, who was saying, "India has been ruined by religion. What she needs is Scientific Skepticism."

My American friend, who had just sat down with me native-fashion, seized upon the theme ere he had exchanged the usual civilities with the other two men. His blue eyes glowed with enthusiasm, as did his cheeks with the heat; they burnt like two ripe cherries.

"Yes," said he, "Scientific Skepticism: that is the contribution of England to this country of holy men and religion." Then beaming over us all, he added, "What do you say to that?"

Well, the young don adjusted his gold-rimmed spectacles, looked attentively at the American journalist's face, then fired his ver-

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bal gun. "The contribution of England to India's Science is a myth. Our Scientific Skepticism comes from Charbaka, Kapila, Kanada, and Aswa Ghosha."

"All that is Greek to me," admitted my friend with alacrity. "I didn't know your country had any science. Say, where do you get that information?"

"My authorities," answered the blinking professor of physics, "are Sanskrit, Latin, Arabic, and Persian texts."

Then followed a deluge of references, compared to which the river at our feet seemed a puddle. Oh, these scholars! He was so erudite that most of it was clear over our heads. However, there were scraps of information that even we could understand. Here are some of his remarks which he recited like a well-memorized excerpt from a brief. My American friend took them down in shorthand.

Indian scientific genius has been versatile. In mathematics the world is indebted to the Hindus for the symbols of number and the decimal system of notation. Proofs of this may be found in Asoka's inscriptions (256 B.C.) and writings of Aryabhata (A.D. 476), Brahmagupta (598-660), Bhaskaracharya (A.D. 1114).

Leonardo of Pisa brought algebra to Europe from Barbary. His work, *Liber Abbaci*, was a translation

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of Musa's work on Algebra based on Sanskrit Veejaganita which was considerably in advance of the earlier work on the subject by the Greek Diophantus, inasmuch as it contained both rational and irrational magnitudes.

The development of mathematics in South India subsequent to the 12th century awaits further research. There are seven Chinese translations of Sanskrit mathematical and astronomical works which should also be looked into.

It is in chemistry, however, more than in any other abstract science that the Hindus made the greatest progress. The influence of Hindu Chemistry on the West was exerted through the Arabs. They gave Arabic names such as Algebra to Veejaganita, and Alchemy or Chemistry to Rasayana. The West thinks that the Arabs originated those sciences. How abysmal! The ignorance of the West is blacker than midnight. Here are some other Arab names for Indian sciences. Sukkar for Sarkara (sugar). The Saracenic chemist Gebir named carbonate of soda as "Sagimen Vitri," after the Hindu name Sajji Matti; Kitab al-Fihrist by Nadim (A.D. 950) mentions that Hindu medical works were translated into Arabic under the patronage of Caliphs from Mansur to Mamun. Haji Khalifa also mentions (13th century) what his predecessors had learned from the Hindus.

Along with advance in the abstract sciences the Hindus made progress in technology also. They have been mentioned in Herodotus as the gold-digging ants and are reputed to have supplied the gold to the Persian empire in the fifth century. The bars of iron forged in India in the fourth century are larger than

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any known up to the last century in any other part of the world. The Hindu developed to perfection the art of tempering steel. They used to add the requisite quantity of carbon for producing steel for surgical instruments of which 127 kinds were known. Saracens learned the art of making "Damascus blades" from the Persians, who again learned to make their "Jawabi-i-Hind" from India. Indians were also famed for the arts of bleaching, dyeing, calico-printing, tanning, soap-making, etc. Pliny mentions that the best kind of glass for the manufacture of burning glasses came from India. The Cashmere shawls and Dacca muslins were much prized by Roman ladies. It is recorded that Europe once ran short of silver in paying for these Indian articles.

After that deluge of information had poured upon us, my friend said, "I guess your scientific contribution is all right. But what else has India to offer?"

"The other contributions of India's culture are too well known," growled the scholar at my friend. "I shall not mention India's unsurpassed Art, Literature, and Drama. But allow me to point out the everyday things of our country which appeared so vital and alluring to the semi-civilized West that they sent out Crusade after Crusade to gain access to them. But the Turks blocked them. Then Europe tried to find a sea-route to India. Christopher Colum-

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bus and other European explorers wanted not high philosophy nor religion; it was the products of the weavers, carvers, and goldsmiths of India that they sought."

After pausing a moment for breath he resumed dithyrambically mixing up proverbs and quotations with his own words.

"Then, as now, India wove fabrics whose enchantment had to be described by such phrases as 'evening silence,' 'morning dew,' and 'delight of dreams.' In ivory they wrought such wonders of design that men in the ravishment of their spirit cried out, '*Keya bat*,—what word can describe this?' And the most important of all the inducements that drew Columbus towards India was gold. In those days India was fabulously rich. When poets wished to describe the acme of wealth in gold and jewels they pointed at India. It was for the physical arts, crafts, and wealth of our country that the Europeans sought for a sea-route, as before them had poured through the land routes Greeks, Arabs, Persians, Tartars, Mongols, and Huns.

"And in between those hordes came some men who wanted what even her own immense physical treasures could not touch,—India's spirituality. Then, as to-day, she gave birth to sages whose holiness humbled the Himalayas.

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Fa Hien and Huen Chwang endured indescribable perils and hardships when they traveled to reach India in order to plunder her (as she likes to be plundered) of her spiritual wealth."

The young scholar stopped. He took off his spectacles, and with the end of his *Uttaria* (tunic or chudder) wiped them, and then wiped the perspiration from his brow. As he breathed his sigh of pleasure, and the rest of us ours of relief, we noticed that the afternoon had almost passed. Very few pilgrims were bathing in the river. The embankments were deserted; at their roots the river kept on cutting with its sharp tawny current.

The Swami now rose to go, saying, "There is a man lying on his death-bed in the village of Saranath. I must go and relieve my chela who has been keeping watch over him all day." His orange-yellow robe rustled slightly as he vanished against that throbbing blue sky down the road to the village. Now the boat-men were anchoring their boats near the monastery ghaut in order to be ready for evening prayer. They enjoyed praying by the sacred grounds of the monastery. It was a pity that the holy man had to go to minister to the sick. For we had no chance to hear his side of the case. So we,

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too, left the professor who was going in quite a different direction.

But as we came to the main thoroughfare, we witnessed an elephant procession that surprised and thrilled me,—as if the India of thirty years ago had suddenly risen from the grave. One of the spectators informed us that an old-fashioned Rajah, on his eightieth birthday, had brought his sons-in-law and sons with him to do fitting homage in the antique style to the Timeless God of Benares. The cornices of the houses on both sides of the road to Ten Stallions' Sacrifice were crowded with pigeons, their throats gleaming in iridescence. Below them, porticos and verandas, aglow with saffron sunlight, now glistened with the scarlet and ivory dresses of men and women who were watching the procession. Below, about forty elephants, caparisoned with cloths of gold, passed on the muddy street. Elephant after elephant, swinging its trunk, ringing its silver bells, moved like a bejewelled cathedral. From both sides of the street gaudily turbaned watchers gazed at them with eyes full of wonder and amazement. Then all vanished like an apparition. The sun had dropped like a plummet of gold in a black sea of silence. The streets were emptied of men, women, and beasts; even the sacred bulls

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stopped wandering about, driven by some instinct for sanctity. For this was the hour of evening Silence when men and women meditate on God.

About the third evening from that day we went to call on the holy man again. We must have come earlier than we were expected, for we found him still immersed in his prayers. It seemed hours that we waited, but lo, with a sudden burst of silver wings, the stars shone in the velvet sky. Then he opened his eyes and said to us, "I am glad you have come. Welcome."

The chela brought a lighted lamp from within the little house and placed it near the holy man on the porch. He disappeared within as he had come, softly, like a panther. The brass lamp cast its indifferent light on the face of the holy man as we went on questioning him. After a number of utterly unimportant questions, my friend spoke out almost bluntly. "I want you to tell me all about India, about Benares. Everything that you have thought and felt about your country."

Here the holy man almost laughed aloud.

"All right," conceded my friend, "leave out such a large order. Just talk of religion and Benares."

"I shall be happy to derive joy by talking on

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such a subject. You have selected the most beloved spot to me. For Benares is the epitome of India. And we know, 'What is not in India exists nowhere else,' " he quoted. Instead of the lovely old man, he seemed to look like something sinister. He was so compelling and strange. His voice grew low and full of dramatic pauses as he poured through it the secrets of his soul. In the light of that lamp he sometimes looked like a wolf, sometimes like an old woman grown old beyond sex; then on a sudden he radiated a child-like beauty. It was all due to the uncertain light of that lamp. He was saying, "As the eagle to its prey, so India pounces upon one's soul. I am sure, no matter where you go, in the end India will draw you. I am old, I travel very little now; my feet do not itch to cover distance any more. But once I did travel far and wide in search of God. No place could hold me. England, America,—none of them could enchant me as this place. Now, after you go hence, some of these days you will be haunted by the image of this land and called by the croon of its deep mystery."

"Why? How does it happen?"

"That no one can tell. Except that the subjective background of this homeland of the sages and God-mad men is longer than anything

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that I have seen. Here men have pierced the deepest secrets of Immortality. Here holy men break into the infinite as a rhinoceros through a thicket. In India, or better still, in this city of Benares, all the world is represented. Here you find a Brahmin temple next door to a Mohammedan mosque, and near that is a Buddhist chapel. And not far from here is the Deer Park where Buddha himself lived and taught. King Asoka planted a pillar there on which are inscribed oblivion-defying words of brotherly love and tolerance. He was the only emperor who turned a whole empire into a missionary college of brotherly love, peace, and tolerance. Here, on the bank of that river, Asoka probably received his letters from one King Ptolemy the '*yavana*' (Sanskrit for Ionian). Here the pilgrim Huen Chwang lived fourteen hundred years ago."

Suddenly the holy man paused and cast a glance at the starry sky. "What is the use of fretting you with history which is but time that binds man? History is illusion, since time is a delusion. This city of Benares is consecrated to the Timeless."

"But, sir, what is it all about? What does India stand for?" cried my Nordic friend.

"Physically she stands for three hundred mil-

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lion souls and thirty centuries of meditation. What India stands for is that religion must permeate all life, be it birth, marriage, death, monasticism, theft, or prostitution.

“What a mixture! Indeed it is. But then, the Infinite has room for all. If He is Infinite, He is inclusive, not exclusive. As many rivers of many colors with their fierce, restless currents enter the sea and are lost under its steady emerald level, so are all things: the silver wanderers, the stars, and the worm that eats the heart of a rose,—all are in Him.

“It is that inclusiveness that distinguishes our religious life. Children are taught their creed from the Gita, one of our scriptures: ‘Whenever virtue is in decadence and vice is in ascendance, then God, the Tiger of Silence, is born in and among men to bring about the Kingdom of Righteousness.’ So a Hindu, from childhood on, can worship with equal consecration the God of Christ, of Buddha, of Mohammed, of Zoroaster, and Moses. ‘There is only one God; it is His prophets who have given Him many names,’ people say here day in and day out. ‘Why quarrel about names when the One Named can end our misery?’ Let us find Him. Religion is realization and not belief. You may believe what you like. But He, your Playmate,

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the Infinite, will come to play with you when your soul is realized. In this, our city of holiness, there is only one thing: namely, each soul is asked, 'Realize God; leave the definitions of Him to the doctors, as you cast bones to the dogs.' The soul's thirst for perfection cannot be assuaged by dry bones. Realization is the chalice that holds the essence. So your religion is not what you believe, but how far you have lifted that chalice to your lips. If India has held your interest, it is because everyone here is the victim of the habits of his forebears (of these three thousand years),—'Longing for God.' Everything you see is trying to utter that which you *cannot see*.

"If this land has anything to tell you, it is this: 'All religions lead to the same God, if you practise their golden rules and do not drug yourself with their respective theologies. The test of perfection in a man is how much he approximates to the all-inclusive Consciousness of the Infinite God. And the only way to teach the truth of anything moral or religious is to live it so that the truth will shine without the spoken word,—through eyes, mouth, nostrils, hearing, hands, and feet of the believer.' Once you trap the fierce Secret of the Universe with the thongs of your realization, you will be able

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to hold the ocean in a thimble, or take the infinite, star-shot sky and put it on yourself for a mantle.”

Here the holy man's disciple brought us sweetmeats to eat and liquid sherbet to drink. Both my American friend and I did not like this interruption. But the holy man remarked:

“All interruptions come from Heaven. Had I spoken another word more, I would have spoken of things larger than my realization. Heaven stopped me with sweetmeats ere I did so.”

That remark puzzled us. We asked him to enlighten us on that point. He vouchsafed us only a slight quotation from the poet. “O singer, let not your art be greater than your Truth.”

The next day, that energetic American writer left Benares in quest of some new material for his book. When I told the holy man of his departure, he commented thus: “Energy is good. But the real energy that achieves all lies not in movement, but in Repose, as the Upanishads reiterate: ‘Then by lying still you shall be present everywhere. Stiller than the hills but swifter than the swiftest flight of man's mind.’ ”

For a while that man of God sat silent, like a

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rock. I glanced at the river below, looking much less muddy this afternoon than on the preceding days of rain and storm. Boats with their green-painted sides ploughed its current. One or two yogis sat lost in meditation on the deserted steps of the ghauts. At that spectacle of Benares I was impelled from within to ask the holy one a question. I said, "What is the essence of India? You who have wandered through every province and visited all the shrines are the one qualified to speak of it. Of what does it consist?"

He quietly gazed into my eyes for a few moments then looked away at the Ganges where the first flush of sunset gold burnt in sombre grandeur. He spoke slowly and almost in a whisper as if to himself.

"The essence of India? It is like a musical instrument. You strike it. It gives out seven distinct sounds. But they have intervals. Between those sounds and intervals it holds abysses of harmony and silences. All controlled yet unrepressed!

"India at the core is a musical instrument. Her seven notes are the seven world-religions, and their intervals are the sages meditating or articulating the Silence."

"Why do you say seven world-religions in In-

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dia? I thought we produced only two: Brahmanism and Buddhism.”

“Just the same, my son, the seven religions of the world are adequately represented here. I have seen and talked to their doctors and teachers. If you beg and wander through India, as I did, you can’t help finding them all. For instance, do you know that we have more than a million Christians in the south who became Christian long before Europe? In Malabar (Southern India) there is a Church which was founded in the first century by St. Thomas, the apostle who doubted. In those southern churches our Christians practise rites older than the Church of Rome or Byzantium. And they have kept it up these nineteen hundred years untrammelled and scathless.

“The only Zoroastrians in the World you will find, not in Persia, the cradle of Zoroastrianism, but in India! Also, though not of Indian descent, has India Mohammedanism; it claims eighty millions of India’s sons, nearly half the Mohammedans of the world. There are Jews here whose ancestors ran away from the cruelties of Christendom in search of peace and asylum. India received them and has loved them nearly a thousand years. What is the use of telling you more of such facts?

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“If you go among the people of this land with a begging bowl between your hands and a blessing on your lips, you will find another country quite different from what you observe from a train window or a motor car. India is too big to have any room for bigotry, hate, criticism, and intolerance. Throughout the ages we Hindus have received and loved whoever came to live amongst us. We never persecuted them for their religion, nor scorned their prophets. We gave their holy book and their Teacher the same respect as we yield to Buddha, Rama, Vishnu, and the creators of the Vedas and the Upanishads.

“No prophet, no matter what his religion, was stoned to death by a Hindu. No Hindu poet has been allowed to die of neglect or starvation. Here no prophet, nor a single poet has been denied his due of praise, blessings, and love.

“How can you starve a poet when your scripture names God—the Supreme Singer? We have loved and revered poets, prophets, scientists, and artists as the torch-bearers from ‘The House of Song’ (Eternity).

“The two things that the West will do well to study in India is inclusiveness of mind, heart, and soul! Respect for all races and all truths,

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and realization of that inward Repose which 'achieves more than any movement.' What that Repose has done for India can be gauged by the fact that she has survived four thousand years and more of events and experiences without losing her bearing or her Truth: she has put her emphasis on the Soul, as she has measured all human achievements by the standard of spirituality. It is not good enough to be prosperous and have every member of a community well-to-do. A community must produce its holy man if it wishes to win the freedom of the city of God. Even in these degenerate days India has not failed at her central task. Behold, she has given birth to Gandhi. Having lit that candle at the altar of Humanity she can well afford to be still another thousand years."

Here the holy man stopped. After a significant pause, pointing at the evening gloom gathering over the river and the city, he said, "The beacon of day is blown out. Silence is falling. Will you meditate with me till the stars are lit?"

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CHAPTER II

THE ANSWER OF AFRICA

W. E. BURGHARDT DU BOIS

THREE things Africa has given the world, and they form the essence of African culture: Beginnings, the village unit, and art in sculpture and music.

Long before the last two thousand years, which we call the years of modern civilization, lay the beginnings of human culture. For ten thousand years,—perhaps fifty thousand years and more,—mankind struggled with the first steps of advance; struggled and wavered, forged forward, retreated, fell, and arose again. This was a period fateful for all mankind,—for all culture. It was far more tremendous in its ultimate significance than anything that has happened since.

It was during these years that the black race, in its own land, Africa, and in all the paths by which it wended its way thither, seems always to have been first. Wherever one sees the first faint steps of human culture, the first success-

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ful fight against wild beasts, the striving against weather and disease, there one sees black men. To be sure, they were not the only beginners, but they seem to have been the successful and the persistent ones. Thus Africa appears as the Father of mankind, and the people who eventually settled there, wherever they may have wandered before and since,—along the Ganges, the Euphrates, and the Nile, in Cyprus and about the Mediterranean shores,—form the largest and often the only group of human beings successfully advancing from animal savagery toward primitive civilization. The ancient world looked upon them continually as creators of human culture and rang with their tributes. Hammurabi, law giver of Babylonia, is called “to go forth like the sun over the Black race.” The Greeks sent Zeus and Poseidon to feast annually with the “Blameless Blacks,” and the Roman historians tell us that the Blacks “conceive themselves to be of greater antiquity than any other nation. They suppose themselves also to be the inventors of divine worship, of festivals, of solemn assemblies, of sacrifices, and every religious practice. They affirm that the Egyptians are one of their colonies.”

Out of many things that these beginnings em-

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phasize we may select one: the discovery of the use of iron. Probably the properties of iron have been discovered in the world many times and in many places, but it seems likely that while Europe was still in its stone age and while neither Egypt nor Western Asia nor ancient China knew iron, the black Africans had invented the art of smelting. It was a moment big with promise for the uplift of the human race. No effective industry, no sure defense was possible for mankind with laboriously chipped stone tools. Copper and bronze made great advance over stone, but only hard iron founded modern industry; and this marvelous discovery was made by African Negroes.

The second thing that came out of the early strife of black folk was the village unit. I shall never forget my first glimpse of an African village. The night before, we had ridden the bar in the moonlight with the curious singing of lithe black boys. Above on the great headland twinkled Monrovia; below lay the black and silent forests beside a sombre sea. But this morning down by the sea and down by the forests suddenly we walked out into a little town. It was a town of the Vais. It was a thing of clay, colored cream and purple, clean, quiet, small, with perhaps a dozen or more homes.

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Authority was here and religion, industry and trade, education and art. It was not a complete thing from a modern point of view. It had little or no machinery; it lay almost defenseless against surrounding malaria. Of news service with the greater world, there was none. Though its whole inner being had been changed and in some respects upset by a new surrounding and invading economy, this little village was a mighty thing; it had come down from a mighty past. Its beginning stretched back in time thousands and thousands of years; it gathered to itself traditions and customs springing almost from the birth of the world. In space alone it stretched back along a path leading from the low thunder of the sea on the black West Coast to the great central plateau of Africa with forest, lake, and sand, two hundred miles away. Perhaps the great successive movements of this vast continent, so veiled to-day in mystery, had brought it even further seaward from the regions of the Mountains of the moon, past Ethiopia and Nubia, Melle and Songhay, Haussaland and Benin, those shadowy empires of the past. Perhaps even this little village here once knew Atlantis itself, and Greece and Phoenicia.

No matter whence the African village came

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and how it is to-day distorted and changed, and has been in the past glorified and degraded, it is a singularly persistent and eternal thing. Again and again this village with its conical huts, its central fire, its grassy streets, its fields of grain and fruit, and its cattle has been reborn in Africa and has spread itself over the endless miles of the continent. Even the African city as it rose time and time again was a city of villages. Ancient Jenne, whence comes our modern word Guinea, "had seven thousand villages so near to one another that the chief of Jenne had no need of messengers," but cried his messages from gate to gate and village to village until within a few moments they had gone a hundred miles to Lake Dibo.

We know the village unit the world over and among all people, but among most folk the village early lost itself in some larger unit, and civilization became a matter of city and state and nation. But the African village, because of geography and climate, because perhaps of some curious inner tenacity and strength of tradition, persisted and did on a small scale what the world has continually attempted on a wider scale and never satisfactorily accomplished. The African village socialized the individual completely, and yet because the village

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was small this socialization did not submerge and kill individuality. When the city socializes the modern man he becomes mechanical, and cities tend to be all alike. When the nation attempts to socialize the modern man the result is often a soulless Leviathan. The African village attempted a small part of the task of the modern city and state, and accomplished that part more successfully. It lost thereby breadth and power, it failed to integrate into a larger permanent imperialism. It never succumbed wholly to a militarism of its own but for that very reason it tasted slavery of every sort to others. But it was and is and perhaps will long be in its limited way a perfect human thing.

In the African village were bred religion, industry, government, education, and art, and these were bred as integral inter-related things. The primitive religion of Africa as developed by the African village underlies the religions of the world. Egyptian religion was in its beginning and later development of purely Negro character, and mulatto Egyptian priests on the stones of Egypt continually receive their symbols of authority from the black priests of Ethiopia. The Negro religion thus developed had something about it that was grim and terrible, and for that very reason it powerfully ex-

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pressed the feelings of the first fighters in the world. The fire and desert, water and jungle of Africa, the beast and bird and serpent, the devil of disease with his flies and insects and worms and the infinitesimal germs that creep in the skin and veins and marrow of men,—all these are personified by the African Fetish. Fetish is a primitive philosophy of life. It is a spiritual explanation of physical evil and it explains by making all things spirit, both the good and the bad, and by seeking spiritual cure for physical ill.

The religion of the black man spread among all the Mediterranean races. Shango, god of the West Coast, hurler of thunder-bolts and lord of the storms, render of trees and slayer of men, cruel and savage and yet beneficent, was prototype of Zeus and Jupiter and Thor.

The African villagers from early days wove cloth, baked earthenware, manufactured instruments and arms, baskets and shoes, soap and glass. They worked in iron, copper, brass, bronze, gold, silver, bone, and ivory. They built in fibre, wood, and stone. They developed an original division of industry, a division first by families and clans, so that even the militarized Zulus are to this day divided according to ancient industrial designation like “the men of

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iron'' and ''sons of corn cleaners.'' Beyond that, division of industry appeared among the villages so that they were grouped according to their reciprocal activities and became complements one to another. One village specialized in fishing, another in wine, another in metals, and still another in trade,—importing from without. Sometimes the division was even more delicate: One Congo village carves elephant tusks, another makes a particular style of hat, and others swords, copper rings, wood carvings, and burnt clay pitchers.

Out of this industry developed the African market-place which knit the continent together with paths and trade centres, from the Gulf of Guinea to Zanzibar and from Walfish Bay to Lake Chad, long before the modern coming of Europe. The trade of African villages early reached the world,—Egypt, Persia, and India, Cyprus, Greece, and Rome, Byzantium, Spain, and Italy.

What the village system lacked in breadth and vision it gained in depth and personal knowledge. There was no monopoly, no poverty, no prostitution, and the only privilege was the definite, regulated, and usually limited privilege of the chief and head men, given in return for public service and revocable for failure.

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This primal village life has to-day largely disintegrated before the white invader, before machine goods and imperial compulsion, but it played its part in the world and was a rare contribution to civilization.

For stubbornly clinging to this fine and narrow village type of government and association, Africa has paid with dispersion and slavery. Dispersion came because the Village could not corral and hold its strongly developed individualities as could the state and empire. So that from days before the dawn of history down to our era a stream of black men have passed out of black Africa and into the world and profoundly influenced civilization by their genius. There was Nefertari, the black queen of Egypt who drove out the Hyksos and was, as Flinders Petrie says, "the most venerated figure of Egyptian history"; there was the black Mutemua, mother of the great Amen-hotep III who built the temple at Luxor and whose direct descendant was the royal princess who by marriage made Tut-ankh-amen Pharaoh of Egypt. As the late Professor Chamberlain wrote: "Besides these marked individual instances, there is the fact that the Egyptian race itself in general had a considerable element of Negro blood, and one of the prime reasons why no civilization

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of the type of that of the Nile arose in other parts of the continent, if such a thing were possible, was that Egypt acted as a sort of channel by which the genius of Negroland was drafted off into the service of Mediterranean and Asiatic culture.”

The second and more terrible way in which Africa paid for her individualistic village culture was by the slave trade; Christian Europe traded in human beings for four hundred years. The slave trade alone cost Africa in dead and stolen nearly one hundred million souls. And yet people to-day ask the cause of the stagnation of culture in that land since 1600!

Nevertheless for all this there was compensation, and this compensation was African art. The sense of beauty is the last and best gift of Africa to the world and the true essence of the black man's soul. African art is the offspring of the African climate and the Negro soul. The sunshine of central Africa cloaks you like a golden blanket; it hangs heavy about your shoulders; it envelopes you; it smothers you in a soft but mighty embrace. The rain of Africa is a consuming flood, a river pouring out of heaven, without banks or current. In Africa the swift, the energetic are the dead. In Africa the “lazy” survive and live. This African

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laziness is several things; it is shelter from the penetrating rain; it is defense from malaria. And it brings with it leisure and dreams and human intercourse.

Deep in forest fastness and by the banks of low, vast rivers, in the deep tense quiet of the endless jungle, the human soul whispered its folk tales, carved its pictures, sang its rhythmic songs, and danced and danced. The languages of Africa grew and developed for their unique work, "so simple and clear in their phonology, so logical in their syntax." From these has descended one of the richest masses of oral tradition of poetry and folk lore which the world knows. To this was early added the art of sculpture.

We have long known of the African artist. Traces of his work have been found in prehistoric Europe, in parts of Asia, and of course in Egypt. Later rich centres of African art were brought to European knowledge on the African western coast. It was long customary to think of this art first as imitation, secondly as inexpressibly crude and funny; but to-day more recent interpretations show that the primitive art of Africa is one of the greatest expressions of the human soul in all time, "that black men invented art as they invented fire,"

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that they spread their ideas of art among their white neighbors, and that their earliest expressions had an originality and fidelity of purpose that the primitive world never surpassed.

Finally, out of Africa and out of the soul of Black folk came music and rhythm. The African not only sang beautiful melodies but he invented part singing, and his instinct for rhythm developed syncopation. He early made musical instruments, and especially did he make the drum a living and speaking thing. His songs "rich as is their weave of rhythm and polyphony are not the only music of the African, but through other instruments of his own invention the black man achieves the independence of human voice that presupposes a conception of music as an art, demanding an understanding of tone qualities and again a sense for the structural building of rhythmic and melodic balances of sound."

What is African music? Have you heard the tom-tom in O'Neill's "Emperor Jones?" Below this ecstasy of fear runs that rhythmic obligato,—low, sombre, fateful, tremendous; full of deep expression and infinite meaning; have you dancing in your soul and have you heard a Negro orchestra playing jazz? Your head may revolt, your ancient conventions

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scream in protest, but your heart and body leap to rhythm. It is a new and mighty art which Africa gave America and America is giving the world. It has circled the world, it has set hundreds of millions of feet a-dancing,—it is a “new” and “American” art which has already influenced all music and is destined to do more. Or again, have you heard the Sorrow Song?

Once upon a time,—I was a youth of eighteen, —I taught school in the hills of Tennessee. I was new to section and people; and on a soft and dark and lovely night, I went out under the stars. And there rolling down across the valley came music. It was as the Voice of Angels upon the Hills of God. It was the sorrow of riven souls suddenly articulate; it was the tears of slaves, the sobs of raped daughters, the quiver of murdered bodies, the defiance of deathless hope. I shivered and ran. I hurried along the stony creek, and up hard hills, and through the gray and twinkling village. And ever as I ran the music, the terrible, beautiful music swept nearer. It became more human, louder, pulsating with life and vigor and yet more poignantly sweet.

There was a building set upon a hill,—a dim, dilapidated thing, half-furnished with bench and board and far-flung door and window.

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There within swayed and danced a people mad with song. It was the demoniac possession of infinite music. Wild arms waved in air, wild feet beat out the time, wild faces, dark, sweat-creased, stared up to God and wild and wilder words cut the night:—

“Stand the storm, it won’t be long, we’ll anchor by and by!”

“Oh, the stars of the elements are falling and the moon drips away into blood,—!”

“Roll, Jordan, roll!”

Oh, it was bizarre,—the people were black and dirty and funny but I stood and wept, and when, in a flash of silence, a woman leaped into the air and shrieked as the dying shriek I sat down cold with terror and hot with new ecstasy.

Again and yesterday I sat in old St. George’s, New York, and heard a whole service intoned to the music set by a Negro composer, built on Negro themes and sung by a white choir. The audience within was spellbound and, without, a thousand friends of Harry Burleigh clamored for admittance in vain.

And finally, last Christmas, I looked out of my window. The moonlight drifted down on palm and mango. Strange blossoms spread their scent on the soft hot breeze. I could hear the dull roar of the Atlantic beyond Cape

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Mesurado. I could hear music,—songs that rose and rolled nearer. Words half English, half Vai, tunes that were once gospel hymns, but Africa had taken them, Africa had given them rhythm and syncopation; high soared the soprano obligato, low rolled the strong big voices of men. It was the strangest combination, re-weaving, new-birthing of an old thing, I had ever heard. Such is the gift of music which Africa is still giving the world.

The essence of African culture then lies in its initial strife which began all culture; in its development of the village unit in religion, industry, and government; and finally in its art,—its realization of beauty in folk lore, sculpture, and music. All this Africa has given the modern world together with its suffering and its woe.



THE ANSWER OF THE MIDDLE AGES

CHAPTER III

THE ANSWER OF THE MIDDLE AGES

RALPH ADAMS CRAM

THERE is a connotation of impertinence in the effort of any one man to answer such a question, particularly within the limits of a magazine article: the subject is so large, so inclusive, withal so puzzling in its varieties and its apparent contradictions that it is really matter for a symposium rather than an essay. Then again there are so many lines of approach, the aspects are so various, there is such an infinity of alluring bypaths beguiling the feet that one hesitates to attempt a synthesis. After all, however, are the Middle Ages widely different from any other in this respect? For a century or two it has been rather the fashion to fix an epithet on a time, some descriptive phrase that, like the old definition of an epigram, is "short, false, and conclusive" and exalts or damns by its isolation of one salient quality, ignoring the many others that mitigate the circumstances of a facile specialization.

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Mediævalism has suffered signally from this method of estimate for it was bewilderingly varied in its manifestations, while its vivid *élan vital* gave each one a brilliancy of presentation that blinds the commentator to all others except the one to which by inheritance and acquired prejudice he is predisposed. One exalts the amazing and perfect arts of architecture, sculpture, stained glass, music; another the social system with its political, industrial, and economic aspects; to a third it is the era of a consummate philosophy and metaphysic; to a fourth a paradise of chivalry, adventure, and romance; while to a fifth it is the time when the Christian religion achieved its highest perfection in theory and in practice, and when it most perfectly directed the lives of the people to righteous ends.

And out of this prodigal variety comes the opposed attitude of those who, hating some one salient characteristic, condemn the rest out of hand and damn a thousand years to ignominy and oblivion. So the classicist in art, finding "Gothic" distasteful, estimates an era by a single prejudice. The Evolutionist follows suit and sneers at the scholastic or mystical philosophy he knows only by name. The pacifist revolts at the Crusades and tournaments and

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private wars, the Protestant shies at the very word "Catholic" and bolts incontinently into some alphabetical society of mystery and awe, while the industrial and financial magnates, the "go-getters" and the advertising experts, appalled at the naïveté and delicate scale of Mediæval society with its ludicrous lack of science and efficiency, consign the iridescent millennium to the category that enshrines the mythical stone age, the cave man, and the sabre-toothed tiger.

One and all they fall back on a single sufficiently descriptive and comprehensively damnable epithet, joining themselves with journalists, scientists, teachers of history, Protestant preachers, and other earnest but imperfectly informed people, and with an assured contentment use the words "The Dark Ages" and "Mediævalism" as interchangeable terms of apt and conclusive description.

Well, the term is appropriate, perhaps, when applied to the major part of Europe from the fall of the Roman Empire until the year 1000, when one has regard to the splendor that preceded and the glory that followed on, though even in this restricted sense it is hardly true of Ireland and the Iberian Peninsula where there was a very real civilization of considerable

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luminosity,—Celtic, Visigoth, and Moorish,—while the darkness of destruction and dim beginnings lay over the rest of Europe. All the same, even if we use the word here in a rough generalization, it is excluded from propriety when we come to deal with the five centuries that followed and that are essentially the epoch of Mediævalism in the sense in which we conceive of the space of time when we try to estimate its inner nature and the contribution it has made to the cultural record of the world. As I say, the first five hundred years after the fall of the Roman Empire were quite given over to making a choice collection of ruins, cleaning away the debris, purifying a soil corrupt with old poisons, and the first fertilizing of this regenerated soil for new gardens, and the laying of solid foundations for more stately mansions for the emancipated soul of Europe. It was not a nice time in any particular respect, though probably less bad than it is painted, but it did its work well, and when the signal was given about the middle of the tenth century the world fell to with a will, and the New Jerusalem of Christian civilization began to rise with disconcerting impetuosity. Within fifty years Mediævalism was functioning with power and it continued progressively for three centuries, when

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it paused on a sort of dead centre and then slowly declined in energy and quality, disappearing altogether from its last strongholds, England and Spain, by the year 1600,—the renaissance of pagan civilization and Hebraic theology (unhandy juxtaposition) taking its place. It is this period of about five hundred years whose “essence” we are called upon to estimate.

Such a process takes on of necessity a certain quality of special pleading. The temptation is great to “claim everything,” and the very variety of the Mediæval expression is an added incentive. The same thing held in the case of the Renaissance which even now is held by a certain “Old Guard” to represent all there is in life of praiseworthy and august. It held in the case of the Reformation; it held in the case of “modern civilization” until the War, and even more the ensuing “Peace,” brought certain unwelcome revisions of judgment. I have been something of a special-pleader myself (not dishonestly I hope) in the case of Mediævalism, but the light shines in unexpected places, and I would try here for a calmer and more judicial method. Abandoning then for the moment the undeniable and supremely logical fascination that lies in the defense of lost causes (the

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majority of those so lost were right, were they not?), let us see if we can estimate with caution and reserve the essence of the cultural contribution of Mediævalism.

I spoke at the outset of the bewildering variety of the phenomena which had issued out of the epoch we call the Middle Ages, a variety equaled only by Hellenic civilization and modernism. Consider for a moment the field that is covered. Most salient, because of its high visibility, is Gothic art with its supreme architecture in the shape of cathedrals, monasteries, civic halls, fortresses, castles, bridges, manors, dwellings in town and country. Equally triumphant its sculpture, which ranks, at its best, with that of Greece; its stained glass (a new art altogether), its exquisite metal work, wood carving, enamels, tapestry, needlework; its music, the basis of all we have had since, its epic and lyric poetry, and its high romance. Altogether one of the three great art epochs the world has known, and in the estimation of many second to none. Equally organic, vital, and original was the philosophical system expounded by masters like Hugh of St. Victor, Duns Scotus, Albertus Magnus, John of Salisbury, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventure, supplemented and perfected by such mysticism

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as that of St. John of the Cross and Santa Teresa. Closely allied was the educational foundation with its cathedral and monastic schools and its sequence of great universities in every country in Europe, the first consistent plan of education in history and the source from which all our schools and colleges derive.

Even more amazing was the development of the political idea from the Vizigothic *Forum Fundicum* of fifth century Spain through *Magna Charta*, and the Constitutions of Clarendon and Bracton's *De Legibus* to the most admirable Assizes of Jerusalem of the thirteenth century, an almost complete revelation of the principles of free, enlightened, and righteous government on which (though as yet insufficiently) our modern system of law and government is based. Whatever we have of true liberty and order in the governmental sense is based not on our dim and distorted classical heritage, but on the clear vision and the creative thought of the monks and the guilds and the commons of the Middle Ages. And this opens up another wide field of revealing theory and constructive action,—the social and economic system of the time. Feudalism was forced by the exigencies of the time, as a working method, but it was vitalized and perpetuated

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by the interpretation given it, and the lofty character as well, by the men of the time who made it their duty to translate an accomplished and material fact into a dynamic ideal. The doctrine of mutual aid and corresponding, reciprocal obligations, with the supremacy of custom or common law and the subjection of all executive, legislative, and judicial acts to divinely revealed moral principles, and the institution of status in lieu of caste, together made up a body of fundamental law of singular cogency and force and formed at least an ideal which was steadily aimed at, and perhaps as frequently achieved as in more recent times.

In close association with this institution grew up the economic system of merchant, trade, and craft guilds, an organism so simple, just, and effective that to-day we are turning to it for the purpose of finding out if here may not lie the solution of our own pressing industrial, economic, and social problems which thus far have baffled solution in proportion as they threaten the continuance of civilization itself. So also came Chivalry, following after the Crusades, they themselves no negligible contribution, in their theory, at all events, and the ideals they incited,—Chivalry with its shining principles (again not always attained) of loyalty,

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self-sacrifice, service, generosity, hardihood, adventure, and the defense of women. It was an institution, or rather a scheme of existence, high-flown, measurably artificial, impossible of frequent achievement, but nevertheless, in its later days of the troubadours and courts of love and *Le Roi René*, shot through and through with idealism, and manifesting itself in terms of beauty like a midsummer dream.

Then what shall we say of the religion of the time when Christianity attained its most personal, poignant, and pervasive form? It is a contentious subject, and the very words "Mediæval Catholicism" rouse, even now, rage and blind resentment, largely, I should suppose, because the critics and assailants have not the least idea what it was, having come in contact with it only through formal histories or what are plausibly denominated "original sources." Well, at least it was beautiful, one of the most beautiful things man has ever experienced, and I have never heard that the same attribute has ever been alleged of Calvinism, Puritanism, or any other of the substitutes that have taken its place.

Now there is ground for maintaining that nothing is true that is not beautiful (an opinion to which I personally incline), and if this con-

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tention is established, then these same modern substitutes for Mediæval religion fall to the ground. The point is not essential to the present argument and is only interesting as a plausible deduction. The fact remains that the great contribution of the Middle Ages to religion was radiant beauty, and the people of that time so loved beauty (as do all normal and civilized individuals and communities) that the beautifying of religion became a passion even more compelling than the present passion for "beautifying" cities, while the thing so adorned was taken whole-heartedly into their lives and for good or ill interpenetrated them from the cradle to the grave—and after. For once religion came down from heaven and became human, the saints were friends, neighbors, chums even, in a manner of speaking. The dead were neither lost, forgotten, nor abandoned to the tender mercies (or otherwise) of abstract and awful Omnipotence; they lived, as ever, only differently. Our Lady, Queen of Heaven, was the eternal Mother of every erring child, and mercy, comprehension, intercession to forgiveness, were hers *in sæcula sæculorum*. And then philosophy, elaborating and applying the original deposit of sacramental truth, gave significance and something of sacramental character

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to everything in nature and life, building up the tangible symbols and media of spiritual verities until men had something to take hold of at every turn, while the great art of liturgics created a series of beautiful forms, and an equally beautiful *mise-en-scène* for their presentation, so that it is little wonder that religion achieved a new life and smote itself into human living as never before.

So here are five or six explicit marks by which we may identify Mediævalism, diverse contributions to the cultural content of the world. As I have said, each of them may be, and by one or another has been, proclaimed as its essence, its distinguishing and unique endowment of civilization. For my own part I do not think I should fix on any one in this sense, enduringly valuable as they all are; instead I should be inclined to find the essence of Mediævalism in the synthesis of these varied manifestations and define it as the sense of balance in life and the determining of true values in their proper order.

In this respect the Middle Ages were the antithesis of our own, and herein lies their usefulness to us to-day. Modernism, in the historic, not the theological sense (though the distinction is not imperative), finds its fatal weak-

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ness in just this loss of sense of balance and its "transvaluation of values," and the endless and infinitely diverse criticism that are now pouring upon it in a rushing stream may all find their justification in this fact.

To assert that the Middle Ages were characterized by just balance and a sense of right values is to court derision, but my best judgment is that it is a fact. It is hard to believe that the wonders of art, learning, piety, and character, that remain to us from that time, and for multitude and quality are almost without rival, could have issued out of a system of society less admirably conceived and organized. Apart from this, however, which may not be accepted as conclusive proof, a study of Mediæval political, economic, social, philosophical, and religious theory reveals extraordinary clarity of thought and an equally notable combination and interplay of these various spiritual energies. Nor was the working out in practice without considerable success. Of course there always has been and always will be a great gulf between practice and theory, for the latter is the product of the few, the former the work of the many and, "democratic" theory to the contrary notwithstanding, the dilution and degradation in process is the inescapable

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nemesis. Mediæval practise frequently failed to live up to Mediæval precept, in which respect it shares with universal history, but a fair judgment will concede that its shortcomings were no greater than in other instances. It is easy to exalt a period of history or to condemn, depending on whether you take testimony from one side or the other, for they are always two sides, two forces, one working towards righteousness, the other towards evil, just as in the case of man himself. There was cruelty in the Middle Ages as there is now; there were selfishness, ignorance, immorality, pride, hypocrisy, as there have been always, and I suppose always will be. On the other hand, there were some of the noblest manifestations of character ever recorded, and some of the greatest triumphs of intellect, creative emotion, and constructive action. The evils of the time have been equaled or exceeded during the last ten years, its virtues have, I submit, scarcely found their rivals within the same decade or, for that matter, the century that went before.

All this however is beside the point; these sharp antitheses always are, and it may be that we lack perspective to enable us to judge justly as to comparative levels of achievement. The point is that in the period under consideration

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there was an unusual degree of consistency in the current scheme of life. All those that factors go to the make-up of well-rounded existence were recognized and accepted. Religion, philosophy, adventure, romance, fighting, charity, work, and play, all entered into the synthesis with, generally speaking, no undue emphasis placed on one to the degradation or exclusion of others. The whole world did not throw itself bodily into the successive pursuit of political power, political license, intellectual license, territorial conquest, industrial development, financial omnipotence, scientific discovery, social anarchy, as it has done since. Instead, all the factors of life played one against the other, correcting excesses, inciting to emulation. There was no high specialization, life divided into water-tight compartments each sufficient to itself and into which none but the initiated could enter. Religion had its say in determining economic, industrial, and political conditions; government was influenced by philosophical and labor considerations; beauty was a valid test of religion; romance and chivalry and charity criteria of life itself. Indeed everything was in a way very much mixed up, but there was less of confusion resulting from this than there was order and sanity and a healthy joy in life. Finally,

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body and spirit were equally realized and accepted. There was no abandonment to a sterile Puritanism on the one hand nor to a futile hedonism on the other. Man was a fine animal in one respect, but he was also a living spirit "made in the Image of God." Both parts played naturally, bravely, and with undaunted ardor and a very saving sense of humor.

Sense of balance in life and the determining of true values in their proper order: this then seems to me the essence of Mediævalism. And it is just these qualities that make it valuable to us to-day as a test, a guide, and an inspiration, for it is in just these respects that modern civilization shows itself weakest.

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CHAPTER IV

THE AGE OF PERICLES

PAUL SHOREY

WE do not yearn to revive the age of Pericles or to be wafted thither in the body by the Time Machine. A day of dialectics in the Gymnasium with Socrates and Lysis might prove disconcerting to the most ardent Platonist; and the most impassioned neo-pagan who ever declaimed Swinburne's *Hymn to Proserpina* at Eleusis or recited Oscar Wilde's *Charmides* on the Acropolis by moonlight would, if quite honest with himself, echo Sidney Smith's echo of Ovid:

*"The good of ancient times let others state;
I think it lucky I was born so late."*

Ruskin, when he visited Perugia, lodged at the Grand Hotel which he had denounced for spoiling the mediæval local color of the city of Perugino. Mr. Cram, I presume, would not put up at a thirteenth century hostelry if any survived in the vicinity of Rheims or Chartres.

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Even Dhan Gopal Mukerji, when he wishes to catch his train in Calcutta or Benares probably telephones for a taxi instead of clapping his hands and bidding the *Khitmatgar* order the *mahout* to put the *howdah* on the elephant.

The true fruits of the study of the past are not slavish imitation, sentimental restorations, and the misuse of historical parallels, but humanism in all its implications,—the quickened imagination, the enlarged soul, the flexible mind, which are the rewards of the disinterested contemplation of many forms of human excellence and various ideals of perfection, something of which, by unconscious emulation, may enrich our own lives.

And of all the avatars of the human spirit that of the civilization which flowered in Periclean Athens has been by common consent, hitherto, the most potent to liberate the intelligence and kindle the fire that in the heart resides of aspiring youth. For the moment, the vogue and breath of fashion set in another quarter. The Grecian gluts us with its perfectness, and our curiosity fastens on our earliest divinations of the dim, prehistoric past and the latest sophistications of the arc-lighted present. It must be either caveman or superman, Tasmanian or Jazz-maniac, to sting our jaded

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nerves or hold our distracted attention. We warm with a sense of kinship to the Neanderthal man or the "Hairy Ape," but Homer and Cicero are too good to be credible, and it costs too much to realize the world

*"When Plato was a certainty
And Sophocles a man."*

It is easier to gape at Tutankhamen and buzz with Marinetti. All the wealth and all the woe of the literate civilizations, from Homer to Tennyson, we find as cold, as confused, as drab as is Mr. Wells's history after he takes leave of the tetrabelodon and before he arrives at the goal of Karl Marx.

But this is a transient mood of reaction,—a weariness of hearing Aristides called "the Just." All competent critics of civilization know, and have said in sentences eloquent but too familiar for requotation, that the contribution of Greece to the sum of the best that has been thought and said exceeds that of any other people. And no rhetoric of partial specialists,—listing the names of Hindu sages and mathematicians, guessing at the contents of baked-brick cuneiform libraries, divining the debt of Cnossos and Mycenae to the Hittites, epitomizing the precepts of Confucius and Lao Tze,

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exalting the age of Dante and Aquinas and the cathedrals as the consummation of human genius,—can alter this secure judgment of the *orbis terrarum*. Yet how make this commonplace real to any but the discriminating readers, who will verify it for themselves? The Elgin marbles and a visit to Athens have brought conviction to some. But art is world-wide, and though a classicist may prefer the Parthenon to Chartres he will not, with an exacting American critic, disparage the culture of Lowell because he enjoyed Chartres more. To rate a Gothic cathedral higher than a Greek temple does not disable a critic's judgment as it would to match the *Chanson de Roland* with Homer.

Again, in the mere pathos of distance and romantic remoteness, Greek antiquity is rather less impressive than immemorial Egypt and Assyria. "You Greeks are eternal children," said the Egyptian priest. The very perfection of Greek work brings it nearer to us, or makes it timeless, like a Platonic idea or the shapes on Keats's Grecian Urn. "In our museum galleries," sings Rossetti,

" . . . to-day I lingered o'er the prize
Dead Greece vouchsafes to living eyes,
Her art forever in fresh wise
From hour to hour rejoicing me."

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And that is all he tells us of the Grecian perfectness. But when, as he is issuing forth, he sees them hoisting in a winged beast from Nineveh, his imagination kindles and is stirred to that wonderful poetic and sentimental expansion, "The Burden of Nineveh," on the theme,

*"Ah! in what quarries lay the stone
From which this pygmy pile has grown
Since thy vast temple, court, and cone
Rose far in desert history?"*

Desert, indeed. But the very bareness of the desert is sometimes more evocative to the modern artist than the divine and definitive art that drew from Keats the cry,

*"My spirit is too weak; mortality
Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep."*

But the primacy of Greece does not rest upon her art, whatever the modern artist's estimate of it. The humanistic supremacy of Greece, and of Athens, the flower of Greece, resides in the simple, prosaic, and, in its bare enunciation, uninteresting fact,—which distinguishes Grecian from every other antiquity,—that the age of Pericles has left us ten or twelve of the world's greatest books,—books supremely significant both for their intrinsic and timeless excellence and because they are the source and in-

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spiration of the Tragedy, Comedy, History, Philosophy, and Oratory of Europe: Aeschylus, still ranking with Dante, Shakespeare, and Milton as not the fourth of the world's four most imaginative and sublime poets; Sophocles, the perfect artist, who calms and elevates us as no other can, the consummate dramatist who saw life steadily and saw it whole, and over whose poetry is shed "the charm of the noble serenity which always accompanies true insight;" Aristophanes, still, in any translation that gives him a chance, the world's funniest comedian as well as the miraculous master of language and the completest comic mirror of a great age; Euripides, who upsets as many ideas as Ibsen or Shaw and whose plays are still the battle ground of "tendency" interpretations and contemporary propagandas; Plato, "at once the glory and shame of mankind because neither Saxon nor Roman has availed to add any idea to his categories;" Herodotus, the first, and still the most entertaining, of seemingly naïve, gossipy, anecdotal, and fact-crammed chroniclers; Thucydides, the earliest, and still the chief, of philosophic, analytic historians, and at the same time the dramatic artist who reduces his most intelligent modern competitors to admiring despair. And a slight but

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legitimate straining of chronology would add to these, Pindar and Simonides, prophets of the imaginative reason as well as unapproachable lyric artists, and Demosthenes, whom sane American instinct recognizes as the type of the patriotic statesman, and whom all educated orators acknowledge as their master,—though Prussianized school-books are now telling American youth that he has been greatly over-estimated in comparison with Isocrates.

But how may any such enumeration convince the readers of Mr. H. G. Wells, who writes with jaunty omni-nescience: "There is a disposition to exaggeration in all human admiration; men will treat the rough notes of Thucydides or Plato for work they never put in order as miracles of style, and the errors of their transcribers as hints of unfathomable mysteries."

It would be easy to overwhelm him with authorities and to remind him, to single out one name, of what was the deliberate judgment concerning Thucydides, not of professed scholars, but for example, of Gray, Macaulay, Arnold, Lord Bryce, and John Morley. But, however it may be with science and pseudo-science, ours is not an age that accepts literary opinions on authority. It proclaims with Emerson: "If Aeschylus be the man he is taken for . . . he is

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now to approve himself a master of delight to me also. If he cannot do that, all his fame shall avail him nothing with me." Very well. The classics of the age of Pericles will abide that test also, if we give them a chance. Neither they nor any other great books can hold the attention of the readers of head lines and "Column" snippets, who glance at half a page of Jowett's translation of the Gorgias and, not catching the dramatic purpose of Socrates's argument, conclude in their haste that Plato was a primitive sophist. But a Greek tragedy, tolerably presented, will move an educated audience anywhere in Europe or America to-day. Aristophanes, fairly interpreted, will convulse an audience with laughter. And any one of the greater Greek classics, even in the "far off shadow of a prose translation," becomes luminous with meaning and inspiration to any intelligent student who will withdraw himself for a few days or weeks from jazzed contemporaneity and patiently read himself into that serener,—so at least it must seem to us,—spiritual atmosphere. That is the sum and the common-sense of the matter. Yet I presume that something more is expected of my contribution to this symposium than the naïve professional admonition, *vos exemplaria Græca*,—read them

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in translation if your Greek is too thickly oxidized to peruse the original. What is their essence, their message, their distinctive quality, their actual service to the thought, the culture, the criticism of the life of to-day?

Matthew Arnold, in more space than is at my command, tried to answer this question in his inaugural lecture on the "Modern Element," written some sixty years ago but now accessible in the third series of his *Essays in Criticism*. The literature that will help us most, he thinks, is one that reflects an age as significant and as complex as our own, and of which the literary genius is adequate to the reflection. The miraculous literature of the age of Elizabeth is too erratic and irrational for our purpose, as a comparison of Sir Walter Raleigh's *History of the World* with Thucydides evinces. The Augustan Age of Rome was perhaps historically and politically even more significant than the age of Pericles, but the literary genius that reflected it lacked the serene adequacy of Sophocles. The happy conjunction of the two conditions is found nowhere in such completeness as in the age of Pericles, which is therefore for us the most helpful and, in a very real sense, the most modern of all the literatures of the past.

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If, now, instead of quoting Matthew Arnold or repeating the list of the qualities of the Greek genius in Symonds, Livingston, or the German compilation of Billeter, we were challenged to define some of the claims of the classics of the age of Pericles to the foremost place in the secular Lampadedromia of world culture, we might first remind ourselves of some of the unapproachable tonic and typical passages in these supreme books: Herodotus on what liberty, equality, and fraternity did for Athens. Prometheus's defiance to Zeus, the inspiration of Milton, Shelley, and Byron, in Aeschylus; or the hymn to the unknown god in the *Agamemnon*. Antigone's invocation of the higher law in Sophocles, or the ode in honor of his birthplace, Colonus, or the lines on human vicissitude that Fitzgerald could not read without tears. The grand chorus of birds in Aristophanes, the despair of even Swinburne's metrical art. Euripides's praise of the city where the Loves and Graces sit in session with Wisdom coöperant in all exercise of noble end. The untranslatable Athenian ideals of simple living and high thinking, culture without effeminacy, and democracy purged of envy in Thucydides's "Gettysburg Address." The grand style in simplicity of Pindar's admonition to

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the great ones of the earth that for all these things God will bring them into judgment, and his warning to hot-blooded youth against that malady of the soul, the love of the impossible. The sublime oath by which Demosthenes confirms his and our faith that in a righteous cause it is better to have fought and lost than never to have fought at all. Plato's—but how choose among those sentences that are “the corner stones of schools, the fountainhead of literatures?”

Even if there were space to quote these things they would miss their effect, torn from their setting and staled as they are by repetition in the popular hand books of Greek life and thought that have flooded the market of late. But if the barbarians, the pseudo-scientists, and the Professors of Anthropology who affirm that the Aztec civilization gives a fair notion of the stage reached by the peoples of Greece and Rome, have their way with American education, and we should forget these things for a generation or two, their rediscovery would intoxicate us as it did the poets and scholars of the Renaissance. For there is nothing in Egyptian books of the dead, or the cuneiform records, or in amorphous Hindu epics on the wars of men and monkeys, or in the Four Books and Five

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Classics of Ancient China, or in Icelandic sagas, or mediæval *chansons de geste* to take their place. But now, as the Roman poet complains, no man deigns to look up at the lucid quarters of the sky and contemplate the too familiar stars, whose beauty if suddenly revealed to us for the first time would dazzle our vision and fill our hearts with awe.

Still another, and it must be our last, way of approach would be to sum up the lesson and inspiration of Athens in three or four simple generalizations. The Athens of Pericles presents to us for the first time in history the vision of a passionately patriotic and incredibly strenuous democratic fellowship of national and civic life. With this goes the corresponding ideal of a rounded and complete development of the individual personality. And, thirdly,—and for us, chiefly,—there is the realization in literature and art of the harmony of thought and feeling, the reconciliation of the head and the heart by the imaginative reason, of which the anarchic literature of to-day, alternately sinking in the mire of realism or fluttering flimsy wings in vain among clouds that await their Aristophanes, seems to despair.

We speak of ideals. And the Athens of the post-Periclean demagogues, pun-pelleted from

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Pnyx by Aristophanes, often fell short of them and, dying of her failure, bequeathed them to us in the words of her historian as a "possession forever." But for a time, and within the bounds of human frailty, the Athens of Pericles embodied these ideals, never consciously apprehended before, more adequately than they have ever been achieved since. Each of them would require a separate essay.

The first essay would be another paraphrase of that "Funeral Speech" of Pericles which has of late become hardly less a muniment of American democracy than the Declaration of Independence, Washington's Farewell Address, and the Speeches of Lincoln. It would need to be supplemented by evidence from the historians and the inscriptions, that what Athens invented was government by the people as well as of and for the people. In addition to the army and navy and the administration and the popular courts that regulated the affairs of the city and the far-flung empire, there was a completely organized local self-government for the one hundred and forty odd demes, the ten tribes, and the thirty trittys, with presidents, secretaries, treasurers, and records and decrees "to be carved on stone" in the first clear-cut and logical business and legal language of the

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world. The mind recoils at the amount of business that it fell to the lot of an active Athenian citizen to dispatch. Galton opines that the intelligence of the average Athenian surpassed that of the average member of Parliament. He certainly had as much to do, despite the Roman proverb about Greek leisure.

Only in abstraction distinguished from this is the ideal of the many-sided expansion of personality also touched upon by Pericles, and the theme of humorous or wistful comment by many modern essayists from Hazlitt to Edward Fitzgerald, who thinks that it would have been an excellent thing for Gladstone or "Old Alfred" or John Stuart Mill, if like Pericles and Sophocles and Socrates, they had commanded or served in the field. There are some dangers in this ideal, and Plato censures the Athenian democracy's disregard of the specialist much as Kipling satirizes American versatility, and Emile Faguet denounces the democratic cult of incompetence. However that may be, the boast of Pericles was then a new thing in the world and remains an aspiration for the America of to-day: "The individual Athenian in his own person seems to have the power of adapting himself to the most varied forms of action with the utmost versatility and grace."

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The essential rationality of the Greek and Athenian genius is a theme for a volume rather than for the concluding paragraph of an abbreviated essay.

It is the "Nothing too much" of familiar quotation, the untranslatable *sophrosyne* about which scholars and æsthetic critics are still writing disquisitions. It is what Emerson means when he says that but for Plato we should doubt the possibility of a reasonable book; what Dr. Johnson meant when he warned an extravagant eighteenth century Pindarist that when a Greek poet made a comparison he always made it like something. It is what Arnold opposes both to mediæval superstition and rationalizing materialism as the religion of the imaginative reason. It is the dominant and, to the bemused and unsettled devotee of the literature of cubisms and dadaisms, the most salutary and stabilizing quality of the art and literature of Athens. To make this clear we should need to contrast it once more with the cult of unreason which our mediæval and romantic heritages, our besotment with pseudo-science, our revolt against all restraints of tradition, our straining for novelty at any price, and the opposition of thought and feeling in the theories of the new psychology and the prac-

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tise of the new poetry threaten to make the dominant note in the literature of to-day. To attempt this in limits that forbid the needful qualifications would strengthen the prejudice that the classicist is by his very vocation incapable of sympathy with modern life and thought. I have no desire to emulate the eloquent diatribes of Ruskin, Gayley, Grandgent, Cram, and, last but not least entertaining, the somewhat overlanguageed vehemence of Mr. Henry Clew's *Mumbo Fumbo*.

The twentieth century saturnalia of unreason which they satirize or denounce purports to be also a quest for a new gospel of soul. But the soul in which a Maeterlinck or an Oscar Wilde or a Tolstoi seeks refuge from the tyranny of materialism and the God of things as they are is the over-soul of irrationality, mysticism, symbolism, exaggeration, disproportion, ugliness, or revolt. And that, though it may appeal to our moods of reaction, will never permanently content us as reasonable beings. The soul that speaks to us in Greek art and poetry and philosophy is the soul of form that doth the body make, the informing soul of the imaginative reason, of sobriety, measure, harmony, proportion, and voluntary allegiance to the everlasting laws of beauty. "The mystical in art,

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the mystical in life, the mystical in nature,—that is what I am looking for. It is absolutely necessary for me to find it somewhere,” cries Oscar Wilde, hysterically *de profundis*,—from the bottom of the pit. “I pray that with God’s help I may still love what is beautiful and strive only for things attainable in the days of my youth.” That is the note of Pindar, most typical of Greek artists, and it is the ideal of Greek education as described by Plato and Aristophanes.

THE ANSWER OF CHINA

CHAPTER V

THE ANSWER OF CHINA

CHI-FUNG LIU

CIVILIZATION consists in a variety of factors, just as life is of many phases. Civilization is an expression of life; apart from life it would be meaningless. Thus we must view civilization from an humanitarian point of view as a phase of living, and not as an academic abstraction. Many factors,—art, literature, religion, philosophy, and the like,—combine to produce what we call civilization, a social state characterized by progress, harmony, and happiness. I hasten to add that progress, harmony, and happiness must be concomitant; we do not want one at the expense of the other or the others; rather, we want them as a whole. It is only from such a premise that we can fairly and accurately trace what the Chinese have contributed to our world-stream of culture.

All the individual manifestations of Chinese civilization,—China's art, literature, philosophy, social codes,—have their source in a cer-

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tain conception of life. This conception is to be found in a broad expanse of love for the Ultimate and the Universal which is the common thought-inheritance of every Chinese. The ends of life and the meaning of life alone count. If civilization is civilization at all, it must add something to man's moral worth, justice, and happiness. For us, the understanding and the taming of natural forces are only secondary. There is no other good than æsthetic enjoyment and moral instruction, no real human tie between men but to love one another. It is only in such ways that one can seek wisdom and inner peace.

Chinese art quite definitely reflects the Chinese concepts of life. It grows out of them inevitably. And to understand it one must have a clear comprehension of the principles that inspire it. Chinese art differs from Western art in that the former does not aim at an exact and complete representation of reality. Chinese artists are poets, philosophers, critics, and theorists who have profoundly studied all the past and reflected on the principles which they applied. It is to Kuo-Hsi of the tenth century A.D. that we owe the idea that in all things it is the invisible spirit which must be set free and expressed, and not their visible reality. He

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agrees with the opinion that "a poem is a picture destitute of visible forms, and a painting is a poem which has put on form." Earlier still, in the sixth century, Hsieh-Ho held that all the painter's effort must strive to render "the life-movement of the Spirit through the rhythm of things." It is the creative essence that the artist should portray. Hence the interest of Chinese art lies chiefly in Nature, in the metaphysical world, in contemplation. Man is only a detail in the Great Whole; the life of the Universe infinitely surpasses the individual life, and it is the echoes, gleams, apparitions from this vaster life which haunt the mind of the Chinese painter. The vitality of Chinese art can be found in intuitive synthesis and vision.

As to painting, the Chinese particularly love the landscape. Wang Wei, Wu Tao-Tze, Emperor Hui Tsung, Li Lung-Mien, Chao Ta-nien, Li Ti are only a few of the great painters. What a painting aims at giving is nature and the joy of it. Harmony between life and nature, peace or tempests, autumn melancholies, spring raptures, natural austerities or delicacies, certain flowers, certain seasons, certain trees, certain moments, and so forth,—all Chinese painting is charged with meaning: it is never the simple representation of a landscape, of a

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flower, a simple visual impression. In a short poem, says Wang An-shih: "It is midnight, all is silent in the house; the water-clock has stopped. But I am unable to sleep because of the beauty of the trembling shapes of the spring flowers thrown by the moon upon the blind." Such sensations, so acutely felt and so mysteriously charged with meaning, can only be rendered "by soft strokes of the brush full of secret intentions." To be pure as the flower of the plum tree, free as the bird, strong as the pine, flexible as the willow,—such is the ideal of Chinese art.

Turning to Chinese literature, we find it on the whole sweet, delicate, and pacifistic,—an unruffled reflection of Chinese life. In one of his poems, "The Old Man with the Broken Arm," Po Chu-I made a hero of a recruit who maimed himself in order to escape military service. It is quite justifiable to say that Chinese people prefer enjoyment to power. No less beautiful is Chinese music, which makes so little noise that one can barely hear it, so that one's heart is never excited. Inseparably connected with all that is of permanent value in our poetry and general literature are the drama and the novel which were developed as distinct forms during

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the thirteenth century. They grew out of associated forms, gradually.

From time immemorial the Chinese have danced set dances in time to music on solemn or festival occasions. In the Odes we read:

“Lightly, sprightly,
To the dance I go,
The sun shining brightly
In the court below.”

The movements of the dancers were methodical, slow, and dignified. Long feathers and flutes were held in the hand and were waved to and fro as the performers moved right or left. Gradually the music and singing prevailed over the dance, gesture being substituted for dance steps. The result was rather an operatic than a dramatic performance; the words sung being more in the nature of song lyrics than of the dialogue of a play.

Chinese religion like Chinese art and literature is quite indigenous, a natural expression of the Chinese philosophy of life. Indeed, the Chinese notion of religion is very slight. The thought of the entire population is permeated by a definite ethical code, but it is not fierce or persecutory. “Religions are many, but reason is one.” Chinese religion is more tolerant,

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more reasonable, and less dogmatic than the religions of any other people; it is hardly more than an ethical code. In China there have never been religious wars.

The most amazing and also the most significant factor of Chinese civilization is the ethical system fused from the teachings of Lao-Tze, Confucius, and Mo-Tze. They belong to the sixth and the fifth centuries B.C. and they have influenced Chinese thought down to the present time. These individuals have probably contributed as much to the formation of our national character as our science, climate, and economic circumstances.

Lao-Tze was an original thinker,—anarchist, evolutionist, pacifist, and moral philosopher. His teachings, which were not so much a religion as a philosophic rule of life, can almost be summarized in one phrase: "Return to nature." Lao-Tze held that every person, every animal, and every thing has a certain "Way" or manner of behaving which is natural to him, or her, or it, and that each must conform to it. *Tao* means Way. If we all lived strictly according to nature we should be immortal, like the heavenly bodies.

What is the function of *Tao* which Lao-Tze so favored? He describes the operation of *Tao*

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as "production without possession, action without self-assertion, development without domination." One could derive from these words a conception of the ends of life. Possession, self-assertion, and domination are at present eagerly sought nationally as well as internationally by most peoples with the exception of the Chinese. Thus an understanding of *Tao* is precisely what is needed in the modern world.

After Lao-Tze came Confucius who laid down some fundamental rules of conduct. To Confucius, virtue must come from good-will. The "golden rule," to treat others as we would have them treat us, which Confucius was the first to formulate, is as much a matter of justice as of benevolence. It is a rule of impartiality as between self and others. "Reciprocity" is its watch-word: "What you do not want done to yourself do not do to others." Benevolence, indeed, should be universal, but there must be a rule of justice in applying it. We should forgive injuries, but we should not treat evil and good alike. "Requite injury with justice, and kindness with kindness." This is not, however, to be taken as justifying vengeance. "Show forbearance and gentleness in teaching others and do not revenge unreasonable conduct." Consequently, magnanimity, gen-

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erosity, and peace-loving became an heritage that is individual as well as social. They became moral forces acting through and upon the individual, expressing themselves in the social institutions that reflect him. Feuds very seldom take place in China. In this respect we must not judge China by the present,—a moment in her long national history; we must view that history as a whole. Chinese life is full of manifestations of these moral forces: it is not uncommon for evil-doers to repent and assume the consequences of their misdeeds without being punished or in any way coerced. Even the northern barbarians who invaded China were quickly assimilated by her civilization. This complete absorption of a strong alien conqueror by the civilization of the conquered is a phenomenon not duplicated elsewhere in human history. The European barbarians of the north who conquered Rome, while they absorbed many elements of the civilization they destroyed, actually (and only after the lapse of centuries) created a wholly new civilization. It is only by using moral weapons that we can spiritually conquer another people. This conquest of her alien conquerors proves better than anything else that Chinese society is maintained by moral control and not by law.

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To live in the service of mankind, to respect parents and superiors (those who are superior to us in morality and knowledge), to be kind and helpful to those in need, to love all men, to serve a good ruler but withstand him to his face if he is bad, to die if necessary for a moral principle,—such is the ideal of personal conduct that Confucius taught to China.

On the side of political theory or form of government, Confucius's opinion was entirely democratic. He held that the people are by nature disposed to virtue; that they break out into mutiny only in times of distress. The duty of the ruler is to keep down taxation, to avoid harsh punishments and excessive forced labor. It is essential "to enrich the people first and then to teach them." In accordance with the doctrine of universal benevolence the people are the first object in the State, and the ruler is their servant. Here we have a theory of conduct as well as a theory of society. Confucianism was always the official teaching, the one in which candidates for the civil service were examined.

The result has been that for many ages the government has been in the hands of literary skeptics. In fact, they have adopted the *laissez-faire* policy advocated by Lao-Tze. Through-

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out her long history the population of China has been happy except where and when sporadic outbreaks of civil war have brought misery; all China's subject nations have been allowed autonomy. Confucius cherished internationalism with such assertion that to him "within four seas all are brothers."

With Lao-Tze and Confucius, Mo-Tze ranks equally. He was a philosopher, an altruist, a radical, and a social reformer. His most famous doctrine is the "universal love" from which are derived those principles,—“non-attack,” “thrift,” and “self-defense.” All these principles could serve to carry out the doctrine of “universal love.” This doctrine is not only advantageous to others, but to those as well who act according to its principles. Mo-Tze especially condemned war,—civil, national, and inter-national. Three chapters in his book are devoted to describing the disadvantages of war. War is not only injurious to the conquered, but to the conqueror as well. Even though occasionally some of the States may make profit at the expense of others, it still cannot be justified. He made a comparison with medicine: if ten thousand people use a certain medicine and only four or five are benefited, it is surely not a good medicine. Thus he was strongly opposed to

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narrow patriotism and militarism. He did not press his principle of "non-attack," but he hoped that this conception would be put into practise. He saw that self-defense might be one means of attaining the aim of the principle. All his students took up the art of war, that is, they all understood strategy. Whenever Mo-Tze heard that one nation was preparing to attack another he would go to the aggressor in an effort to prevent the attack. If the intention was persisted in, then Mo-Tze and his students joined the invaded nation in its program of self-defense. This he did several times with great success. Apparently he stood for the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Once he said: "If the existence of the world depended upon my killing myself, that would mean that killing myself would be a benefit to the world, and as such I would be willing to do it." This shows that Mo-Tze possessed a spirit of self-sacrifice and charity. Progress, to him, is possible not by struggle and competition, but by mutual help and universal love.

In order to attain this aim, he gave special emphasis to social psychology and economic reconstruction. He and his followers lived a simple life, wore coarse clothes, and by their example encouraged hard labor. He laid down

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a formula: "Help others with your additional labor and distribute your surplus money." The Chinese people really carry out this formula, especially with their families, relatives, and friends. This is the reason why Chinese wealth is so well distributed.

What these Chinese philosophers created was democracy, cosmopolitanism, pacifism, a fair distribution of wealth, and, above all, freedom. Due to the influence of their teaching, for more than two thousand years neither priest, nor noble, nor feudal system has played any part in Chinese history. It is the only society which is truly democratic; it is the only one in which the administrative power has never been entrusted to rank, birth, or favor, but always to merit alone by a system of purely literary examination. In her own way, in her life as in her philosophy, China has subordinated everything to human reason, and built up a society in harmony with its precepts. Chinese philosophy, art, and literature are the most human. And in this quality of pervasive humanness we find the essence of Chinese civilization.



ANCIENT EGYPT

Part One

CHAPTER VI

ANCIENT EGYPT—*Part One*

MAURICE MAETERLINCK

Translated from the French by Alfred Sutro

THE Egypt of to-day would not, but for the mildness of its climate, long detain either tourist or artist, who so quickly exhaust all that is to be seen in towns, the river, and country, were it not that, behind all these, there hovers the prodigious, insoluble enigma of a civilization that goes back more than seven thousand years, and has left on this earth of ours innumerable traces that are as clear, as fresh, as deeply graven, as though they dated from yesterday. There is nothing in the whole world that can compare with the temple of Luxor, the tombs of the Valley of the Kings and of Sakhara, with the pyramids, with the underground vaults of Apis. There is nothing, not even the famous temple of Angkor or the palaces in China, that is so strange, so unexpected, so bewildering, so curiously, disconcertingly human,—and human

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in a fashion that does not seem to belong to this planet. Nowhere in the world can we find an art that is so fantastic and yet so nicely balanced, so barbarous and yet so exquisitely cultured; an art that wanders with the same graceful ease from the colossal to the puerile, from the sublime to the grotesque; that produces, now a flimsy sketch, and then a perfect drawing finished down to the minutest detail; an art leaping from the most appalling monstrosity to a truth and sincerity that are as delicately real and true, as moving, as any greatest masterpiece painted by man. No race, no people, not even the people of Greece or China, has set so lasting, so powerful, so ineffaceable a seal upon this earth, or flashed on the world a vision so compact and massive, so absolute, so stupendous, so logical in its apparent illogicality, so immeasurable within its self-imposed limits, so perfectly rhythmic in its own special rhythm. If Egypt had never been; or if, like Atlantis, all her monuments had disappeared in a planetary catastrophe, the history of this world would be the poorer for one of the most striking manifestations of the human mind; as it is also probable that Grecian art and architecture, and those that derive from them, would have been vastly different.

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Was there beauty in all this? We cannot tell. Too many thousands of years, too many thousands of ideas, divide us from these grandiose monuments. We marvel at the waste of force and energy; they seem without any cause or reason to be sprawling their vastness in the void. Our first impression is that these colossal structures are malignant, hostile; we gaze at them resignedly, not attempting to understand. Then, little by little, as the blood leaves our brain and our eyes see more clearly, the crushing weight on us grows less, and we begin to discover something human in this overwhelming mass. We distinguish; we separate; and before long we note the rudiments of what were later to develop into the laws of the architecture we hold to be the most beautiful of all. There can be no doubt that the Greek temple,—the Parthenon, Segesta, Girgenti,—exists, in its entirety, in Karnak. No great effort of imagination is needed to produce it, complete, from its Egyptian matrix. It actually exists,—and in a less rudimentary state, in the Temple of the Queen Hotshopsitou, of the XVIIIth dynasty, at Deir-el-Bahri in the Valley of the Kings. There you find the unfinished porch with its entablature, its columns, and its capitals; if we came across it at Mycenae we should not be sur-

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prised, and the Atrides would have felt at home there, and have offered their sacrifices to Zeus. And yet it is one of the most ancient temples in Egypt, and dates back to 1500 B.C. The Greeks would have added a pediment and lengthened the columns a little; the building might then have been set up at Girgenti or Paestum without offense to the most delicate eye.

As for the gigantic statues of their gods and kings, while some of these seem mere hopeless monstrosities, and others are purely conventional and erected as it were by the dozen without any kind of conviction, there still are some that possess an authority, dignity, majesty, a supreme serenity, that the art of sculpture has hardly ever again achieved.

But it is the tiny masterpieces of their realistic sculpture that attract us most to-day. In the museum at Cairo there are statues in wood, diorite, schist, granite, limestone, sandstone, alabaster, and copper that belong to the ancient empire and date back to about three thousand years before Christ. They represent scribes, bakers, kings and queens, women grinding corn, cooks, brewers, hunters, naked children. One has only to look at them to realize that the art of reproducing the human body, human life

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and movement, the play of muscles, the face with a soul behind it, has rarely exceeded the level of what we find here; and that certain of these figures reveal a piety and tenderness, a power to breathe thought and feeling into matter and mould them into shape, that we shall rarely find equaled in the greatest artistic epoch of any country and of any time.

Side by side with these exquisite little masterpieces, mixed up among them, are quantities of objects that are disconcerting in the extreme, that are hideous, stupid, childish, and bewildering. Let us suppose that you go to the first floor of the museum, to the long gallery reserved for the treasures recently disinterred from the tomb of Tutankhamen. Apparently this is the first time that the actual articles the dead man used during his lifetime have been found in an Egyptian tomb; the couch on which he lay, the throne he sat on, the garments, the jewels, the ornaments he wore, the things he had handled. As a rule only "doubles" were put in the tombs, in other words more or less faithful reproductions or facsimiles of these objects. But here, Tutankhamen being very young when he died, and his death having probably occurred suddenly, there will have been no time to make the "doubles."

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Further, Tutankhamen was the special favorite of the priests of Amon, whose worship he had restored; Amenophis IV, his father, in his revolt against sacerdotal arrogance, having substituted the cult of Aton. The priests were unwilling that the double of their well-beloved king should have to wait, while facsimiles were being made, for all the household affairs that would be needed in his new life; they consequently huddled together, without any delay, whatever had been in his palace at the moment of his death, and, with amazing prodigality, piled it all up in the different chambers of his tomb.

The actual exhibits in the show-cases of the museum give us a fair idea of the daily life, the surroundings, of a Pharaoh of the XVIIIth dynasty, that preceded the Christian era by fifteen to thirteen centuries. It was, following after the Pyramids, one of the great periods of Egyptian power and Egyptian art. Among other marvels, we find the torso of a young girl, which ranks with the most adorable pieces of Greek sculpture; we find wonderful bas-reliefs, and the bust of Amenophis IV, Tutankhamen's father, an exquisite example of an art that had reached its zenith.

And then, side by side with these, there is the

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furniture of poor Tutankhamen, which is the most extraordinary medley of crazy bric-à-brac that ever figured in an auctioneer's nightmare; gold-encrusted couches with ivory and mother-of-pearl inlay posed on jackals or oxen that are flattened out like earthworms and totter on misshapen spidery legs; chests that look like milliners' band-boxes, chariots of war that might serve as creaky perambulators, thrones on which no one would ever dare to sit, and, above and beyond all, alabaster vases that are so monstrously and absurdly overcrowded with ornament as to baffle all description, covered with sickly eruptions and knobs and bumps that shine and shine again,—the whole affair such a muddle and of such lunatic bad taste that the most ridiculous pieces of crockery offered as prizes at the humblest country fair would seem, by comparison, models of simplicity and classical restraint.

What does it tell us, this life of old Egypt, the most ancient that it is possible to reconstruct with any approach to certainty,—what does it tell us, as we gaze at it here, in the very spot where it had its being five or six thousand years ago, under the same unchanging indigo sky with the sun shining on a land of abundance, generous and fertile beyond compare,

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and on the banks of a river that would seem, unlike any other river in the world, to be truly the friend of man? Externally, materially, in all that concerns the climate, the produce of the soil, the scenery, things to-day are more or less the same. The ploughs, the ships, the animals, the methods of irrigation, the people at work in the fields, look for all the world like the figures that cover the walls of the tombs of the ancient empire. The only difference is that Egypt is comparatively treeless to-day, whereas then it would probably have been more wooded. As for the life on the river, which is the most important of all, for the Nile is the soul of Egypt, the same *dahabiyeh* with long swallow's wing sails still crawl along the dull yellow waters, that in the winter months nothing disturbs save only Cook and Son's steamers.

At the first glance, therefore, one would think that all was the same, that the thousands of years had not interrupted the reign of the countless Pharaohs who succeeded one another on this earth. But the atmosphere is different. The shell has remained intact, but there is nothing inside. Compared with what it used to be, the country exists only on the surface. Its real life is gone, the life that was three parts of itself, the life that we find so difficult to under-

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stand, for it was the life of death. And indeed ancient Egypt was, above all else, a tomb. The idea of death absorbed, overwhelmed her; nor was it an idea that, as with the Christians, offered hopes of eternal felicity to the true believer, but a death behind which lurked grim shapes, grim ordeals, a death that held out poor comfort, and was at its best a pale replica of life, prolonged as far as could be underneath the ground and then finally absorbed in nothingness.

The only matters of serious interest were mummies, sarcophagi, and the passing away of one's friends. Funerary industries crowded the towns and the banks of the river. Everyone, down to the poorest *fellah*, had himself embalmed. The country was overrun with corpses. The essential thing was not to be happy in this world, but to have the assured possession of an inviolable tomb that should be very comfortably furnished. The cities of the living were as nothing compared with those of the dead. Even the palaces of the kings have disappeared; and as for the houses both of rich and poor, these were either constructions of lath and plaster or shanties hastily run up with wood and reeds in which the people camped while they waited for the symbolic barque that

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was to waft them to the other shore. But, across the river, in the "Land of the Meeting of Men," arose "The Good Dwelling," the eternal city, stately and steadfast, built of granite into which thirty or forty centuries have bitten in vain. Whatever served life has returned to the ooze of the river, to the sand of the desert; all things connected with death have remained, and abide; for the whole soil of Egypt is riddled, like a sponge, with innumerable tombs, while the surface is covered with pyramids and temples that are in fact no more than the tombs of gods and kings.

Did this shadow of death weigh on the people as much as it would on us? That is scarcely probable. The peasant or *fellah* in the days of the Pharaoh, as in our own time, had no leisure to meditate on life beyond the grave; he toiled from the rise of the sun to its setting for a wage that barely sufficed to keep off starvation. And yet, in the folk-lore of the XIIIth dynasty, there is a story, *The Fellah's Complaint*, translated by Maspero, which shows him no poorer or unhappier than he is to-day. He leaves his village to seek his fortune, with a convoy of asses laden with salt and reeds, wolf-skins and jackal-hides, seeds of all kinds, grapes, pigeons, partridges, quail,—in fact, quite a respectable

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cargo of produce from the Plain of Salt, and one that certainly conveys no suggestion of penury. On the road he is robbed, through some shabby trick contrived by the slave of a Palace Intendant. Nine times in succession does he return, bubbling over with bold and incoherent and incessant talk, to demand justice of the Intendant who, poor man, means well, but cannot discriminate between the conflicting statements of defendant and plaintiff. But at the end, through the personal intervention of the Pharaoh, the peasant obtains restitution of all that had been taken from him.

Now, to the enemy from without, the Pharaohs were pitiless. They put in chains, they mutilated, they exterminated, regarding this as their most obvious and undoubted duty; but in regard to their subjects, there never was perhaps in all this world a long line of monarchs so just, so humane, so paternal. With the exception of an occasional bastinado inflicted on a recalcitrant debtor, you will never find, in the hosts of paintings and drawings, an Egyptian being ill-treated, tortured, or put to death. In the midst of a barbarous world, manners were so gentle on the banks of the Nile that when it came to inventing some terrible punishment for the damned nothing more terrible

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could be found than suspending the criminal face downwards in the shades, casting him among swine, or having him devoured by hippopotami or crocodiles. It was only much later, at the beginning of our era, that the Asiatics taught them to invent a Gate of Hell, that pivoted on the right eye of the wicked rich, to his extreme discomfort.

But the inhabitants of the great cities,—the functionaries, officials, scribes, merchants,—all those, in short, whom we would include to-day in the aristocracy and middle-class,—what sort of life was theirs? It cannot have been attractive to be confronted by corpses at every turn; to be surrounded by gods that were nearly all monstrous, nearly all malignant; to have, as the sole object of one's existence, a tomb underneath the ground. It is quite possible of course that, in spite of their lugubrious environment, the Egyptians of the olden days made the best of things, just as we do. In any event, the mural paintings show us that their life was not forever troubled with thoughts of death.

With the exception of a few high dignitaries, a few elect among the priestly caste who realized perhaps that to become a god was to return to the divine nothingness, the whole people, from the richest to the poorest, from the mas-

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ters to the slaves, from the most cultured to the most ignorant, even the kings were obsessed by the idea of the frail, precarious, hesitating survival of their trouble; and if they had any desire to be happy on this earth it was, in the main, that they might provide a starting-point, a model, material, for their happiness under the earth, their happiness beyond the tomb.

Whatever height the speculations of the initiated priests may have attained, it is certain that they made no effort to communicate it to the crowd. In the matter of the double, they gave solemn sanction, even in the royal tombs, to the grossest and most childish beliefs. The more distinguished the dead man, the more ridiculous would be the arrangements for his posthumous existence. Some measure of idealism obtained in the ordinary tombs. There it was held sufficient to represent by symbols and images the objects that the shade would need. But in the tombs of the kings the priests buried the exact facsimiles of these objects, sometimes the objects themselves; sometimes legs of mutton and chicken, vegetables and fruit; and sometimes mummified servants.

We cannot yet tell, with any certainty, what were the secret thoughts of the Egyptian priests; we are not even sure that they had any

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beyond those which are found in the cryptic pages of *The Book of the Dead*. Much has been said in regard to their occult science that the most recent Egyptologists have by no means confirmed. It is of course true that the Great Pyramid of Cheops presents us with extraordinary enigmas, unlike those contained in any other monument in the world. For details I will refer the reader to the fine book of Abbé Th. Moreux, *La Science Mystérieuse des Pharaohs*; let it suffice here if I mention that the meridian, the North-South line that passes over the apex of the Great Pyramid, is still, after the discovery of Australia and America, the actual meridian of to-day. Further, if we multiply by one million the height of the pyramid we obtain the distance from the earth to the sun. The length of the polar ray is given, as well as that of the sidereal year, and the distance covered by the earth on its orbit in a twenty-four hours day; the number of years of the precession of the equinoxes, a phenomenon only discovered by Hipparchus in 130 B.C., the density of the earth, and many other marvels that it would take too long to tell.

These things can scarcely be coincidences, for all that the method of arriving at the measurements, multiplying now by one million and now

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by ten, may appear a little arbitrary. But it is not impossible that the Great Pyramid, which dates back to the beginning of the IVth dynasty, about 3000 B.C., and is one of the most ancient monuments in Egypt, may be the tomb of some former civilization. In any event, the later monuments have, at least up to the present, revealed nothing remarkable. Indeed we find that the mechanics and geometry of the ancient Egyptians were of the most elementary order, and that in mathematics they had not even contrived a figure for each of the nine units of the decimal. It has long been regarded as a marvelous achievement that they should have been able to transport their enormous obelisks from the quarries of Assouan to Thebes, two hundred and fifty miles away, and to Memphis and Gizeh, a distance of five hundred miles; huge blocks which they would turn into statues or hoist on to the top of their pylons and pyramids. But their mural paintings, which record all the events of every-day life, show that this colossal transport was effected quite simply by means of boats; and that the hands of men set the great blocks in their places,—man-power, as we say to-day, being practically inexhaustible, there could never have been any difficulty in providing the requisite number. When a stone

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of some fifty tons weight had to be lifted on to a pylon, there would be erected, by the side of this pylon, as we find to-day at Karnak, a mountain of earth and bricks, forming an inclined plane, along which thousands of slaves towed and dragged the gigantic monolith.

It has also been regarded as curious that the paintings in their tombs, sometimes most delicate miniatures, should appear as fresh, with every detail minutely recorded, as though they had been done by daylight, and without a trace on the wall of smoke from a torch or lamp; and this although the tomb, dug into some mountain-side, must almost always have been plunged in impenetrable darkness. It was imagined, therefore, that the Egyptians must have had some kind of cold light, the secret of which is lost to us, or perhaps even electricity; or that, by some play of mirrors, a ray of the sun was thrown from reflector to reflector on to the wall that had to be painted. But there has been a recent discovery of a quantity of lamps which, it seems, undoubtedly burned alcohol; and it is presumed that the spirit which gave a smokeless light was the alcohol obtained from dates.

It would seem as though there has been some tendency to magnify the mysterious science of

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the Egyptians. In mechanics, astronomy (excepting always the Great Pyramid), in industrial and mathematical equipment, they were probably behind our ancestors of a thousand years ago. But as they had at their disposal whole armies of slaves, slaves of war and slaves of their own, over whom they exercised an absolute despotism, they were able, like the ants, to carry out vast enterprises that we, with our wonderful machinery, would not venture to undertake.

In all this we can find no trace of occult science. And yet Egypt has always been considered the cradle, the birthplace, the favorite abode of occultism. The whole world of antiquity regarded it as the country of the gods, the home of wisdom and mystery. The great sages of Greece,—Solon, Pythagoras, Plato, and many others,—undertook the long and perilous voyage in the hope that the priests of the Valley of the Nile would, of their knowledge, grant them the replies to supreme enigmas. But apparently, save for some hoary legend like that of Atlantis, there was no revelation, nor did they learn much of value.

So far as we can tell at present, therefore, the mystery of Egypt does not seem to have been very extraordinary. And yet our first

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feeling, as we set foot on this enchanted land, our first desire, and one that remains with us always, is to fathom the secret of that prodigious, teeming life of old that still haunts these tombs and temples. We cannot credit that so ancient a faith, with the myriad inscriptions and images that are five or six thousand years old, should not hide something that is very great, something that we have never divined. The men who fashioned them go back to the very origin of the race. For more than fifty centuries they lived and multiplied and prospered, in an almost unbroken peace, on this one spot of the globe; and this is a thing that has never happened to any people. Beyond all others, therefore, they must have had time to study the problems of life; they must have had an opportunity, a leisure, such as have probably never existed before and will never exist again.

Yet the further we advance the less mystery remains. The truth seems to be that we are inclined to exaggerate their moral and intellectual acquirements, as also their culture; that this civilization was above all an agricultural one, a civilization of great landed proprietors and of rich, pious, and superstitious peasants,—unless it be that we have so far only grasped the super-

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ficial meaning of paintings and hieroglyphs; and this is by no means impossible.

As we glance through their books, notably the famous *Book of the Dead*, whose cryptic title leads us to hope for a key to the Beyond, we are conscious of the same disillusion as when we visit their tombs and their temples. Yet to them it was the book of books, the one that surely contained whatever might be known of the future. Fragments of the sacred text cover the walls of all the tombs, the sides of all the sarcophagi, and even the cloths in which the mummies are swathed. The book was the talisman, the guardian, the protector, the supreme hope of every one of the dead. But to us it is a disappointment. There is one chapter, devoted to the Judgment of the Dead, in which probably for the first time in this world, the lofty idea of the drama of human consciousness and the survival of the soul is flung, like a ray of light, into the darkness of those almost prehistoric days; but, apart from this, the book is so full of commonplaces that we ask ourselves, even more anxiously than in the case of the mural hieroglyphics, whether it be possible that we have really grasped the entire meaning.

The Book of the Dead, at least as far as we can understand it, is above all a ritual of magic,

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a collection of magical formulas. It tells the dead what words must be used to keep the monsters at bay that wait on the other side; or to cause to fly open the gates that admit to the thrice-happy life in the gardens of Ialou. And, so that he shall not forget them, these sacred words are painted inside his coffin. All that we know of Egyptian religion is thus hedged round with magic. They were convinced that certain formulas, certain attitudes, certain acts, pacified or dominated the gods; bound, loosed, or controlled the unknown forces of this world and the next. In its essence the government was no more than a sacerdotal oligarchy, founded on magic; so we find the Book of Exodus speaking of "the magicians with their enchantments;" the rod transformed into a serpent, the waters of the Nile and of the whole of Egypt, even in the household vessels, turned into blood, the country covered with frogs.

There are not lacking proofs that the Egyptian priests and magicians employed the crudest methods to trade on popular credulity. At Karnak, for instance, in the obscure chapel that contains the statue of Sekhmet, the goddess with the face of a cat (or it may be the statue of Mout or Bastet, so interchangeable are these divinities), the lighting is from the

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roof only; and it is made to fall so cunningly on the figure that the face seems almost to be alive, to move; even we sceptical Europeans have difficulty in assuring ourselves that it is all illusion. Indeed, in most of their statues, which had movable arms and legs and were made to speak, the trickery was of the most childish kind. Thus, for instance, when it was considered necessary that the god Chous Nefer-tohep, the third divinity of the Theban triad, should show signs of animation, he was carried to a place in the temple that was provided with a specially prepared silver ceiling. But indeed very little was needed to delude the good people. In the great ceremonies and processions it was enough for a priest to assume the mask of a god for all to be convinced that they beheld the god in person. And in all the temples underground passages have been found, known only to the initiates, who made use of them when it was necessary to remove the offerings that the gods were supposed to have consumed.

Where did the real science end, and deception begin? Who were they that knew of the cheat, and they that did not? We should find this question difficult to answer, in the case of our own religion. How reply to it then, of a cult

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that has been dead three thousand years? Did the priests, realizing how impossible it was to raise the masses to their own lofty monotheistic conception, allow popular credulity and superstition to follow their natural course, and sink by degrees to the lowest depths of a muddled fetichism and polytheism that were childish, senilely inane? A similar phenomenon is to be noted in other religions, especially those of India and Persia; and indeed nearly all of them, in their endeavor to make themselves understood by the common herd, become the more degenerate, degraded, and confused the further they wander from their source.



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Part Two

CHAPTER VII

ANCIENT EGYPT—*Part Two*

MAURICE MAETERLINCK

Translated from the French by Alfred Sutro

IN the midst of the incoherence and inconsistency that pervade Egyptian theology, we come across traces at times of a secret religion, traces that the parasitic growths of the popular religion have not been able entirely to hide. We find that these innumerable gods with the ever-changing names are in truth only one god, who was at the same time all the others; one god whose name and form varied with locality or temple, with his powers and functions, with dynasties and kings. The Pharaoh is a god during his lifetime; all men are gods after their death, and whichever god they choose to be. God is all, and all is god; consequently there is only one god, and he cannot be explained because he is all. Thus we arrive at a pantheism so far-reaching that it becomes monotheistic; and then of necessity turns into absolute agnosticism, because we cannot know the great all.

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This secret religion formed the basis of the mysteries, which the Greeks copied, notably in the mysteries of Eleusis, the most famous of all. We learn from the thousands of paintings to be found in tomb or temple that it was the great drama of life or resurrection that these mysteries allegorically conveyed. Under the myth of the resurrected Osiris lay hidden the history of all mankind. Even as Osiris was recalled to life by magical incantations and formulas, so might the death of every man be made the beginning of a new existence, provided the same magical incantations and formulas were employed. To the profane, who interpreted this new birth literally, the life that was to start again was more or less the same as the one that had just ended; to the initiate it meant a life of the spirit, an eternal and universal life in the great all. And it is possible that initiation was practically no more than the study during one's lifetime, the rehearsal as it were, of the great after-life drama of death and the new birth.

The essential aim of the mysteries, therefore, was to give expression to the nebulous promise of agnostic pantheism; but they wrapped it in a multitude of metaphors, both anthropomorphic and zoöomorphic, for the benefit of those

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who could not lift their eyes so high. The texts that expounded it, and proclaimed that man was strictly and wholly god, and identical with all gods, were never, though precautions were taken, really kept secret. They were contained in *The Book of the Dead*, of which there were thousands of copies, handed down from father to son. But if these austere texts had been circulated among the people, there would have been an end to religion; and they were put aside, therefore, carefully kept in the background. The priests, urged by the desire to add to their number, multiplied indefinitely the names of this secretly unique and unfathomable god, multiplied his attributes and his images. Magical incantations took the place of the doctrine it was so difficult to understand, so dangerous to dwell upon. The priests framed and sanctified formulas that were supposed to render those who made use of them, and knew not, as happy and vigorous in the other world as those who knew,—that is, the initiates. There may possibly have been two kinds of initiation; the one, and the higher, to pantheism and agnosticism; the other, more practical and frequent, to the magical formulas; and indeed we find again and again the religion which prayed to and worshipped the gods inextrica-

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bly confused with the magic and witch-craft that brought those gods to their knees and compelled them to obey man's bidding.

Here once more we note the inconsistency of the Egyptian mind, which at one moment attains the loftiest height of the greatest religions, to fall back immediately after into an abyss of barbaric stupidity, of imaginings that are incredibly inane. Thus we have the curious spectacle of a king who has proclaimed himself the equal of the gods of Abydos and Heliopolis, monarch of earth and heaven, lord of yesterday and to-morrow, and the descendant of Ra, stooping to the pettiest, most contemptible subterfuges, passwords, and falsehoods, that he may ward off the crocodiles and hippopotami, tortoises, snakes, baboons, and red asses, that bar the road which leads to the eternal fields of Ialou.

It is possible that this grand agnostic pantheism,—which is the loftiest peak that human thought has ever climbed, or that any religion has ever attained,—is it possible that, as some have believed, it may be merely the lingering echo of an ancient tradition, left behind by another race of men; a race that has disappeared but was more intelligent, more spiritual, than those that have survived? If the foundation of

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all great religions is more or less the same; if, having sacrificed a god that the world might be saved, they all end in absorption and annihilation in the divine, may we infer that the idea fell ready-made from heaven and that the different primitive religions did no more than accept it, mangling and corrupting it after their own individual fashion? The suggestion is attractive, but evidently somewhat fantastic. M. Alexandre Moret, one of the leading French Egyptologists, very justly remarks that, at the fetichism stage, which is the origin of all religions in Egypt as elsewhere, "The mass of primitive men believe that their soul will be saved, because it is bound up with the 'Totem,' in other words an animal or vegetable species or a class of objects that cannot *all* perish. At the death of the individual the 'Totem,' the immortal, collective soul, gathers unto itself the atom which it had sent forth on this fleeting excursion."

Thus, in the night of the centuries that have no history, no sooner does man emerge from his animal stage than the thought of survival frets him, and he yearns to find a resting-place for his soul. May we not have here the humble origin of the belief in immortality, the origin of all the creeds that, starting with the wretched

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Totem, grew and expanded, keeping pace with the intellect, till they attained the inscrutable, unfathomable gods of India, Persia, and Egypt, and even the supreme God of Israel, who is not the Jehovah of the Bible, but he of the secret traditions, the En-Sof of Zohar? There is not one of these gods whom we might not worship to-day, without the least sense of degradation; for our own reasoned, scientific agnosticism has discovered nothing else, at least nothing better; and the final truth was always, is still, and probably always will be, that after death we disappear in the entire Totem; that we have never known anything, that we know nothing now, and that we never shall know. Notwithstanding all we have learned and all that science has taught us, we know nothing more of our origin and our end, we are no further advanced, than the pre-historic savage who worshiped, as the symbol of his god, of the immortality of his clan and his soul, a cat, a falcon, crocodile, or merely a clump of reeds.

Of this higher religion, which was never as systematic, as widespread, as philosophical, as those of India and Persia, the Egyptians retained only one essential dogma, the Judgment of the Dead. This was the basis of their system of morality, and nearly all their religious

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literature derived from it. The loftiest expressions of this dogma, notably the deification of the soul or the return of the soul to God,—which connects with the Vedic Nirvana just as much as with agnostic pantheism,—fell by slow degrees into neglect, or at least receded further and further into the background; and the Judgment dwindled into a mere appearance before a tribunal whose procedure very much resembled that of our courts of to-day. This matter has been dwelt on so often that I will merely mention a few leading features.

Brought before Osiris and forty-two divinities, each one representing the sin he is called upon to punish, the dead man is amazed to see his heart in one of the scales which Horus holds in his hands, the other containing the image of Maat or Maït, representing absolute justice. He then pleads his own cause, and makes his confession. This confession, like everything else that concerns Egyptian morality, is exclusively negative; he enumerates all the sins he has not committed. In Egypt it was of more importance to have done no harm than to have done good. Should the nicely balancing scales testify to the sincerity of his confession, the dead man becomes the equal of Osiris, he is Osiris himself; and, being Osiris, he is all the

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gods. He is free to go where he pleases, take the form that he pleases; he can choose his own destiny, either climbing into the vessel of the sun, when he becomes Ra the supreme god, or betaking himself to the heavenly field of Ialou.

But, to judge by what we see on the walls of the tombs, it does not look as though the defunct took much interest in this deification, or that he had any special desire to board the vessel of Ra or to sojourn in the fields of Ialou. He is free to go where he pleases, on earth or in heaven; but, rather than be let loose in an infinite that inspires him with no confidence, he prefers to remain close to his mummy, in the comfortable, well-furnished, well-provisioned tomb where he can resume the occupations and enjoy all the pleasures of his terrestrial life. This at least would seem a legitimate inference; for the paintings treat all that concerns deification in the vaguest and sketchiest fashion, while the most elaborate care is lavished on the way the "double" installs himself and organizes his existence; the double not being perhaps properly speaking the soul, that is, the divine soul, but from the practical point of view a much more interesting soul, the soul of every-day life, the human soul of an existence that is to be indefinitely prolonged.

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These are obviously somewhat irreconcilable beliefs, or at the least ill-assorted; and in Egypt, as everywhere else, the lowest prevails in the end and swallows up the others. Even the Judgment of the Dead, that noble, solemn drama of conscience passing judgment on itself, was not allowed long to remain on its pinnacle; very soon it became enough for the greatest criminal to recite certain formulas, for him to be welcomed by Osiris and receive from him the divinity reserved for the innocent.

But if the dead man could not clear himself before the posthumous tribunal; if his heart, heavy with crime, inclined the scale downwards, and he was not provided with the magical formulas that control the gods, what happened then? Le Page Renouf, the most learned of English Egyptologists, declares that in not one of the inscriptions hitherto deciphered is there record of punishment inflicted on the condemned. Here I think he is wrong. In that vast, black, desolate furnace, the terrible Valley of the Kings, I myself have seen, notably in the tomb of Sethos I, unmistakable figures of the damned, hanging head downwards in the shades, or their souls being driven into the bodies of swine which are tormented by monkeys, the swine apparently being the only ani-

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mal that will never look up at the sky. It is impossible to get the better of him, my dragoon used to tell me, so long as he has his nose on the ground, in the muck. He will do nothing you want him to, and beating or threats are no use; he struggles like the very devil, and yells loud enough to alarm the whole village. But jerk his snout up to the sky and he will suddenly stop, alarmed, disturbed, staring in amazement at the wonderful blue vault that he has never seen before; his piercing shrieks dry up in his throat; he becomes as gentle as a child, and you can do with him what you will.

This is the spiritual atmosphere that pervades these innumerable underground tombs, that enfolds the whole country over which there reigned thirty dynasties of Pharaohs. It was the atmosphere breathed by those mighty Kings, who became gods in their lifetime, and so actually and concretely gods that they worshiped themselves and offered sacrifices to their own statue. And yet these splendid monarchs at times betrayed a very small mind,—for instance, he who was the greatest, the most truly Egyptian of them all, the famous Rameses II, called Sesostris by the Greeks, and believed to have been the Pharaoh of the Bible. His mummy is in a show case at the Cairo Museum.

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He is now, as he lies there in his glass box, with a saucer on either side of him containing disinfectants, only a black, shriveled, horrible little old man. Not very long ago, the tropical heat of an Egyptian summer so worked upon him, or liquefied him perhaps, that he raised his right arm aloft, to the unspeakable terror of the attendants in the gallery.

He reigned for sixty-seven years. It is to him that we owe the vast buildings at Luxor, at Karnak, the tombs of Rameses, the temples of Abou-Simbel and of Abydos, the colossal statues of Memphis,—in fact, half the monuments and temples of Egypt from the Delta down to the Second Cataract. But so monstrous and morbid and childish a vanity possessed him that he appeared to resent the existence of any king before himself. He was jealous of all that had been done by other kings. His life was poisoned by the records of their glory. Wherever it was possible he caused their royal seal, that was stamped on the granite, to be erased and his own set in its place. He would have liked to wipe out the whole history of Egypt, till it came to him. And this destruction of seals, with the accompanying violation of tombs, was frequent among the kings. The successors of the famous queen

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Hotshopsitou, for instance, took incredible pains to blot out for ever the record of her reign. They obviously were not intelligent or far-seeing enough to realize that their bad example would inevitably be followed, and that, notwithstanding all their incantations, they would in their turn be treated in exactly the same way as they had treated their predecessors.

The moral and intellectual atmosphere, even of the throne, was not very remarkable. It falls far short of the level reached in India or Persia. It hovers over the ground, it cannot rise above commonplace, every-day things. It strikes one as a little heavy, a little musty, like the climate, like the Egyptian way of living. For the Egyptian of old seems to have been more alert, more active, industrious, in fact a better kind of citizen than the Oriental of to-day. Baked by the sun, he still kept his full vigor; there was more of the European about him than of the African or the Asiatic. Incredibly extravagant in his palaces, his tombs, and his temples, he was inclined to be economical in private life, conventional, a lover of order and method, a little humdrum.

Moreover he was much less austere than we are led to believe by the thousands of paintings

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that depict him as everlastingly surrounded by spirits and gods, or performing his solemn ritual in religious and funeral ceremonies. He takes no pains to conceal his pleasures, which he does not regard as vices. He loves women, wine, and particularly beer, the national beverage which, like the bread, is prepared afresh every day. He is seen drinking it in pleasant kiosks or under the shade of the vine, as he plays his game of draughts or listens to music on the bank of the little pond, which ornamented every garden, with pretty girls round him clad in tissues "light as woven air." Regarding it as his duty to follow the example set by his gods, he marries one of his sisters; and as these incestuous marriages went on for thousands of years our prejudice against consanguineous unions may perhaps rest on no scientific basis.

It is at least certain that, in regard to sexual matters, his ideas differed from ours. To quote Maspero: "Manners were easy in Egypt. Maturity came quickly to the girl, who lived in a world where the laws and customs seemed calculated to inflame her natural ardor. As a child, she and her brothers played together in a state of absolute nudity. When she grew up, it was considered modish to expose the bosom, and to wear garments so transparent that noth-

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ing was hidden from the eyes of men. The maids who waited on her guests and her husband in town wore nothing but a narrow girdle round the hips; and in the country the peasants threw off their one garment as they started work on her fields. In her religion and the religious ceremonies she attended, there were obscene manifestations of the godhead; and the hieroglyphics she used when she wrote paraded lewd pictures before her. The mention of love did not, as with the modern girl, conjure up visions of an ideal love, but merely a clear and precise image of its physical side. The woman to whom the notion of adultery came could not brook the smallest delay; but one asks oneself whether there were more women with this idea in Egypt than elsewhere?"

Without endeavoring to answer the distinguished Egyptologist's question, we may recall the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, and a precisely similar adventure that befell a certain Anoupou, as is related in *The Tale of Two Brothers*, which dates back to the XIXth dynasty.

Prostitution, also, was quite differently regarded by the Egyptians. The Pharaoh, in the Story of Rhampsinitus, prostitutes his daughter so that he may obtain the name of the king

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who has robbed him of his treasure. Cheops does the like to procure the money required for the completion of his pyramid; it needed but a few jewels to induce the divine wife of Baïti to betray her husband and become the king's favorite; and Thouboui, in the Adventure of Satni-Khamois with the Mummies, gives herself to Satni, as soon as the agreed sum has been paid. All these things are told without any suggestion of blame or surprise on the part of the narrator. It is true that these stories merely belong to the folk-lore; but they will probably convey the spirit of the time in which they were written more faithfully than strictly historical documents.

And yet, for all these vagaries, the Egyptian was brought up to love justice and, above all, truth; and truth formed the foundation of his whole moral code. The true and the just were so closely interwoven in his mind that he had only one word to express them both, as he had only one for falsehood and evil. "Speak what is true, do what is true, let all thy actions conform with the truth, because truth is great, and mighty, and abiding, and to attain its limits is to attain beatitude."

We have taken a brief and cursory glance at a civilization which, though its qualities were

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but mediocre, endured for more than four thousand years. It is, with that of China, the longest that history has ever known. For forty centuries, while the rest of the world was given over to barbarism, massacre, brigandage, rapine, and monstrous disorder, it procured for the people who lived under it a happiness and tranquility, security and peace, that might well be envied by the people of to-day who rank among the most fortunate.

What were the forces that kept this civilization together? Obviously and above all, the priestly oligarchy that held the reins, an oligarchy of wise and thoughtful men who jealously guarded their secret; while above them were kings not only by divine right but actually divine, the monarch not being merely the representative of the god on earth but the god himself, and so concretely and actually god that no one, himself to begin with, for one instant doubted his divinity, of which he was so sincerely, so deeply convinced that he worshiped his own image and did it obeisance.

But there were other peoples who were governed by prudent oligarchies and kings who held themselves to be gods, and that nevertheless did not last long. In the Egyptian people, as in the Chinese, side by side with the divine

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authority that strengthened the social edifice from its base to its crown there existed a certain force that never left them, an authority humbler than the other but more effective, inasmuch as it permeated, saturated, the entire organism; and this was the obsession of death and the adoration of the corpse. Strangely enough, wherever the thought of death is uppermost, persistent, and paramount, life takes a firmer grip, quickens, multiplies, flourishes. The two civilizations that endured the longest, that were the most stable and tranquil of all that are known to us, had the same ideal: a coffin.

Can it be that this ideal best serves mankind? The ideal of material happiness, whatever bliss it may lead to, has never brought content to man; it destroys more rapidly than it builds, and ends only in disaster. The spiritual ideal of the great religions has its abode in altitudes that only a few can attain. But the humble ideal of a posthumous life and dwelling that shall be more or less the same as those one has left here, and of certain duration,—this is a dream within the reach of every man, one that every man can understand. It is, if we may attach any faith to the experiments and still very contestable affirmations of our psychists, the

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least extravagant perhaps of all the conceptions that man has formed of his future, and the only one which has some faint chance of realization. And it must be remembered that this ancient religion of the Pharaohs, however fantastic and, at times, grotesque its setting may have been, still remained in its essence a very reasonable religion, and one that, stripped of the follies and extravagances added to please the crowd, connects with the greatest hypotheses.

At the least, this accessible ideal lifts existence on to a plane where time and the good and evil happenings of the day may brush against it but cannot harm. It provides a channel for man's hopes and illusions, his dreams and bold ambitions. It gives imagination a foothold; it leads to a Beyond whence there is no desire to stray. It teaches resignation and patience. It does not dissolve life in the infinite, but offers a broader scope, a wider horizon, and a sure and attainable goal.

THE ANSWER OF ANCIENT AMERICA

CHAPTER VIII

THE ANSWER OF ANCIENT AMERICA

HERBERT JOSEPH SPINDEN

Part I—Economic and Industrial

THE progress of humanity towards higher co-operation can now be studied in two independent families of civilizations, one in the Old World, another in the New. In each case it is possible to examine a transformation of human society out of the wandering, predatory herd into the agricultural community, and then, by slow degrees of expansion, into the nation and the master nation.

If we let such wild romanticists as Elliot Smith and Leo Wiener destroy each other by opposition,—and this is logical since they attempt to explain the same general factors in American civilization from opposite directions, one by a migration of people from Cambodia in eastern Asia and the other by a migration from Nigeria in western Africa,—then sober anthropological opinion stands without challenge.

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This opinion is that the American Indians came in from northeastern Asia via Alaska many thousands of years ago, after the ice had retreated. They were on the Neolithic plane of culture, as were all other enlightened tribes at that time. They spoke many languages, had simple tools, and the beginnings of nearly all arts. In other words they were flush with their Old World brothers.

In the Old World and the New the higher destinies of man were independently solved. But because the nations of western Europe adopted as the best arguments of superiority certain engines of coercion they were able to subdue the most civilized nations of America in a trice. Mexico and Peru were conquered because of their high culture, not in spite of it. The nations of Europe could not conquer the uncivilized peoples so easily because here there were no social orders to usurp, no stores of food to feed armies, and no display of wealth to attract mercenary adventurers into armies.

The display of the great nations of the earth is mostly paid for by compromise or complete negation of their own civilizing principles where outsiders are concerned. The working of that wonderful system of morality known as the ethics of Christian nations makes one group



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of political entities superior to its own laws when dealing with another group. Ownership and sovereignty were denied to Montezuma and Atahualpa, as they are being denied to the Riffians or the Javanese to-day. This code of privilege is based on a concept of civilization not justified by cultural abilities. When England, setting up as the foremost champion of social justice, provoked the Opium War with China in order to increase a tribute from degradation, her action meant that China was outside the law. Yet China has social personality at its highest, she has arts, ethics, science, covering three times the space of England's life.

What is civilization? The anthropologist attempts no slender, precious definition tinctured with loyalty to the special set of religious, political, and artistic ideas in which we now have our being. Viewed through such glasses, the other man's culture is obviously defective and can be relegated, safely enough, to one of the twilight states of barbarism. The barbarian, you will remember, was the man who talked in another language than Greek,—and therefore had nothing worth saying.

I have watched rows of pasty faces in the subway rushing from unloved work to stupid

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pleasure and wondered if these men deserved to be called civilized who have not the moral strength and simple virtues of the savage. I have even thought that the African Bushman in his thorny camp beneath the stars must have intimations of grandeur which many persons miss to-day in the midst of a splendid city of accomplished dreams. At least it is clear that the lowest tribes of men have things to teach the highest, and that the merit of civilization must be made to express some relation between opportunity and achievement.

Let us say that savagery ends and civilization begins when the herding instinct of the human animal is intellectualized, when extensive coöperations are established for the common benefit, when ideas of use and beauty find adequate expression and creep toward a standard of the absolute.

Opportunity, or the lack of it, is another name for environment. There are great differences between the natural layout in the Eastern and in the Western Hemisphere which must be given due weight when we compare civilizations. In America few animals were available as helpers of men. The llama was domesticated in Peru, but in Central America and Mexico there was no wild animal capable of being

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transformed into a burden bearer. In the Old World there were various draft animals, but the horse will perhaps be most notable in human history because of his connection with the extended use of a mechanical device known as the wheel. This was not invented in America because there was little demand for it. But there were many other inventions here which parallel Old World progress, as well as original contributions of tremendous value to the present and future of mankind.

To an unjustifiable extent we judge the cultures of the past by the forms of art and dismiss as inconsequential the forms of economic life which lay the ground of social coöperations and make art possible. Yet the arts of civilization are based on leisure saved from the pursuit of food, and all mankind is presumably endowed with enough sense and sensibility to rear structures of decoration and ceremony upon a good system of physical living. Furthermore, matters of mechanics show continuity and developing growth, while matters of beauty flame and fade. Note how architectural engineering in Europe shows a steady progress from post and lintel construction to arch, dome, pendentive, and carefully balanced thrust in flying buttresses, while the orders of classic decora-

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tion are utterly submerged in the tide of Gothic beauty.

Real intellectual advance is the oriflamme of civilization, but this may reside in other things than the painting of landscapes and the writing of verses. Actually, every great manifestation of culture is richly possessed of æsthetic expression, but the best heritage for the future is one that consists largely of utilities. Such things as the domestication and upbreeding of plants and animals across the thankless years or the perfection of machines and processes may be no less intellectual than the carving of non-existent gods in marble or the refining, by logical formulæ, of philosophy that had its birth in an erroneous pattern of the universe.

The present economic consequences of the nuclear civilization of ancient America are incalculably vast. Although the area in America which produced high arts is only a fraction of the area in the Old World in which civilization had its swing for thousands of years, yet the flow from this fountainhead furnishes our United States with the elements of its material greatness. About four-sevenths of our total agricultural wealth is the gift of the American Indian; and the economic materials and processes which passed from his educated hand

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into our industrial life are hardly less important. The annual value at our farms of plants domesticated by the Indian in tropical America, and slowly adjusted to a wide range of tropical and temperate environment, amounts in the worst years to more than \$4,000,000,000 and in the best years to more than \$8,000,000,000.

Archeology discloses four principal economic civilizations in the world cutting across the nationalist civilizations which historians make so much of. In the Old World there is first the civilization of wheat supplying the economic base for high culture in Egypt, Assyria, Central Asia, and Northern China. It was of dry land origin and comprised a set of domestic plants and animals,—such as wheat and other cereals, cattle, sheep, goats, horses, many fruit trees including apples, pears, and peaches, and fibre plants such as linen.

Secondly, in the Old World there is the civilization of rice in the wet lands, coming at a later time, and contributing another set of food plants and food animals, of which we may mention rice, bananas, cocoanuts, chickens, pigs, oranges, and sugar.

Similarly in America there is an earlier arid land civilization with irrigation, and a later wet land phase. The first domesticated plants

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were maize, beans, pumpkins, and tobacco, which passed far and wide. Tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, were later developments in the arid zone. In the wet lands we find an adjustment of several dry land plants and an original domestication of such new foods as manioc, sweet potatoes, cocoa, pineapples, and so forth. In addition there are fibres, gums, and medicines,—including cotton, heniquen, and cabbage, rubber and chicle, quinine, cocaine, and others. The list of animals and birds is smaller but includes our national feast fowl, the turkey, as well as muscovy ducks, llamas, and various dogs.

In the economic layout of the two hemispheres the only common element was cotton, and here the New World developed finer species than the Old. The swaddling clothes of the squatting swamis are now mostly woven of American cotton which has driven the British Indian fibre from the world's market. Maize, or Indian corn, is a marvelously domesticated plant, tamed and broken to more kinds of soil and climate than any Old World plant.

But this material condition has its spiritual side. The up-breeding of plants among American Indians was largely the result of a ceremonialism which intruded into the matters of

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everyday life. Careful regulations were prescribed by the priests in the acts of agriculture. For instance, the Tewas of New Mexico to-day distinguish twelve types of corn, each type having a supernatural corn youth and corn maiden as its protector. They plant these types of corn in separate patches and select the most perfect ears for seed. The Mayas of Yucatan have varieties that ripen in six weeks from planting, and others that mature at different intervals up to five months. Hundreds of fixed kinds of maize, adjusted now to dry lands, now to wet, ranged in ancient America from sea level to fifteen thousand feet elevation, and from the mouth of the Rio de la Plata to the mouth of the St. Lawrence.

Not only is maize our greatest crop but it forms the principal food of all America to the south of us. It has played a great part in building up South Africa and Australia and is far from a negligible factor in the economy of Europe and Asia. This plant was domesticated along with beans and pumpkins on the highlands of Mexico and Central America perhaps 4000-3000 B.C. It gave rise to the Archaic civilization which carefully developed the sedentary arts of pottery and weaving and distributed

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them, along with agriculture, over the more arid parts of the New World.

The Maya civilization rose with great demonstrations of intellectual and artistic power from the level of this archaic one, beginning about 1000 B.C. The Mayas lived in the wet lowlands of Central America after first adjusting the vegetable foods of the highlands to their habitat. Then they domesticated other plants which were properly of humid origin. A great development of excess food let population increase till there were millions of human beings on the plains of Yucatan. This profit from the ground did not produce laziness but yielded, instead, pyramids and temples, and paid for the costly upkeep of kings, priests, and artists.

The example which the Mayas set was followed by other tribes far to the south. Many new plants were trained, educated, and cajoled into a status of willing servitude. The dividends of this ancient industry are collectable to the end of time, but the Indian himself must not expect appreciation or even a dole of justice. Yet there was lyrical praise enough when the domestic strawberries were brought back to England from Virginia and when West Indian pineapples surprised the palate of Europe. Potatoes of the Peruvians are the surest guard

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against famine on those boastful northern marches where the proud Nordic once lived on herrings, rye bread, and the produce of borrowed cattle.

When a famous English novelist wrote a history of the world in two heavy but refreshing tomes, he devoted about eight pages to the contributions which America before Columbus made to the world after Columbus. In this cramped space he could not explain how modern industrial England (not to mention New England) owes more to American Indian cotton than to any other material factor. Nor did he explain that the white harvest of poor Lo scattered values and utilities among all the nations of the earth.

It is not part of our emotional complex to feel a twinge of gratitude for the plants that feed and clothe us. In keeping with artistic, rather than practical, judgments on civilization, we find sentiment enough about the clinging rose, which embodies the philosophy of ideal beauty, but where is our poet who can muster the drumming thunder of a thousand mills and sing the song of cotton?

Cotton as a wild plant was blown around the world, and species are found on desert islands like the Galapagos. Two kinds were domesti-

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cated in India, one a tree cotton and one a small herb alternating with wheat to complete the agricultural year of the Hindus. Both of these cottons had very short fibres which could be spun by hand. Mention of cotton in the Old World is found as early as the seventh century B.C., but the first archeological examples are from well within Christian times.

In America two, or perhaps three, basic species of cotton were developed into a great many varieties and were bred to yield fibre three or four times as long as the cotton plants of British India. Cotton fabrics are found in the Southwest among remains of the pre-Cliff-Dwellers. Columbus was the son of a weaver and was familiar with the scraggy cotton that the Arabs brought to Spain. His first day ashore in the Bahamas was spent in trading red caps and glass beads for cotton thread in balls.

Thus was begun the commerce in cotton between Europe and America, which reached its peak in 1911 when about 11,000,000 bales of 500 pounds each crossed the Atlantic from the United States and half as much stayed at home. Now it is true that the sentimental associations of the Europeans are with Asiatic cotton.

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Calico is from Calicut where Vasco de Gama landed in India; muslin is from Mosul across the river from the place where Sennacherib cultivated tree wool in his hanging gardens. Nevertheless, it is the cotton of the Mexicans, the Peruvians, and the Arawaks that rules the world to-day.

From the 'Tribute Roll of Montezuma it appears that 234,800 porters' loads of woven cotton and 4400 bales of raw cotton were delivered yearly by conquered Indians as tribute to the Aztecs. This amounts to about \$35,000,000 in present values. The first Spanish governor of



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Yucatan writes in 1561, that the Mayas of the northern part of the peninsula were then paying tribute 1,280,000 yards of woven cotton. Indeed, cotton was an important item of Spanish commerce till disease and slavery had tremendously reduced population in Mexico and Peru.

Cotton weaving in England had small beginnings, the raw material being secured in the eastern Mediterranean islands and in Asia Minor. Then the British East India Company brought in Hindu textiles and created a London vogue. In 1692 John Barkstead called attention to the extraordinary fine fibre to be secured at the British Plantations in the West Indies. When, by a series of fine inventions beginning with John Kaye's thrown shuttle, looms and spinning frames were improved and put under mechanical power, it was the longer staple of America that made the venture a success. In 1794-98, when the industrial development in spinning and weaving was in its infancy, England's cotton imports show 45,000 bales from America and 11,600 bales from the Old World. Then followed the introduction of American cottons into India, and finally into Egypt.

It is very clear that the industrialization of

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cotton in English factories was the first move in our present Mechanical Age and, as seen above, it was the old civilizations of America that furnished the necessary product.

But it is perhaps worthy of note that the art of weaving had been carried very far in America, the fibres being cotton, heniquen, the wool of the llama, alpaca, vicuña, and other allied animals. Ancient Peru shows more varieties of weaving than any other place in the world, and they are of a degree of fineness untouched on the more celebrated looms of Asia or Europe. Wool weft on cotton warp, in tapestry technique, has been found with three hundred and twenty or more picks to a square inch. Various finishing processes were developed, such as tie dying and hand painting, but for the most part designs were mechanically involved in the weaving itself. Among the beautiful colors of the New World were cochineal, añil or indigo, fustic, and various other logwood stains.

Sometime about 600 A.D. a tribe called the Olmeca, or Rubber People, began to play an increasingly important part in Central American affairs. They made a great ceremonial as well as practical use of the gum of the *Castilla elastica*. They used this gum for a black, evil-

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smelling incense to induce rain, and they also made rubber dolls representing gods, rubber balls for a sacred game, and other things. Rubber became an important item in Central American trade.

Fuentes y Guzman, who wrote an early history of Guatemala, quotes a writer of about 1540 as follows: "Then he speaks of rubber whose profitable uses the Spaniards took from this province where the people were much given to varnishing boots, capes, and other useful objects to make them water proof, and to make tennis balls." Think of the multiple uses of rubber to-day, spreading out from these first Indian uses, partly utilitarian and partly ceremonial.

The inventive mind can work with suggestive materials. If the Countess of Chinchona had not experienced the curative properties of quinine in the native *materia medica* of Peru and spread its fame in Europe, it is far from certain that this most valuable of all medicines would ever have been discovered. To-day it is taming tropical fevers and retrieving vast stretches of productive land.

These Indian plants and processes enter into the life of to-day to an astonishing degree. They represent a careful regimen, and inven-

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tive turn of mind, and a continuity of purpose. Perhaps some persons will see no evidence of civilization in these matters, being tuned in only to the registers of art. Perhaps they would see more significance in the carving of jade, or in the rapid and very complete development of metal working in gold, silver, copper, tin, lead, and platinum, in the lost wax process that was used for hollow castings. Or the parallelism to the Old World, in the preparation of lime mortar for architectural uses, might catch the imagination of some as important. Solid lime and rubble constructions with vaulted rooms and rich decoration in stone veneer were made by the Mayas.

If this array fails to convince, there remain other facts for consideration in the privileged categories of art and science.



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CHAPTER IX

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RAMSAY TRAQUAIR

EVERYONE acknowledges that women to-day are taking a more apparent place in public affairs than they used to. How great was their position in the past is difficult to judge, for they have been very much in the position of a junior partner. His name counts for little; his senior gets the credit, yet he may be indeed the directing spirit of the business. Such has been the position of women, and it is safe to say that their actual influence on society has been greater than the historic record admits.

Many recent writers have claimed that the present civilization of North America is predominantly female, and this although the legal and political freedom of women is certainly not greater here than in, say, England. Dr. Einstein asserted this, and caused great anger in the women's clubs by linking it to a statement that American cities also suffered from intellectual poverty. Of course, Dr. Einstein could

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refer only to that kind of intellectual activity which he himself practises; for most American cities are seething with an activity which shows itself in 'social work,' education, and charity organization.

This work is largely in the hands of women and is surely a part of intellectual activity. It is probable that what Dr. Einstein missed was abstract intellectual activity, the search for knowledge for its own sake.

The daily papers and the magazines frequently discuss the increasing public activity of women. They have, indeed, formed a set of opinions which we find repeated again and again. These may be shortly summarized:—

Women are more imaginative and more artistic than men.

Women have a more delicate intuition than men.

Women make excellent stenographers.

And, of course, woman's place is the home.

On the other side:—

Men are better fitted than women for the rough battle of life.

Men are more suited for business than women.

Men are physically stronger than women.

At first sight, this curious collection of qualities appears to give all the desirable qualities to women, but a little consideration shows that

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it really means that men are better able to occupy well-paid jobs than women. That is the beginning and end of the whole argument. All the agreeable but financially useless qualities are assigned to women, all the paying ones to men. The discussion, as at present conducted, is in its inmost heart economic.

This tale of the strong, brutal man who alone is to be allowed to swindle his fellow men in the rude battle of life, and the fragile, delicately minded woman who is to sit at home, cultivate her mind, and enjoy the proceeds, is a fable. It has no shadow of resemblance to real life. It goes on living because most men and many women want it to be true.

Even the most extreme advocates of women's rights do not claim that men and women are the same, either physically or mentally. We all acknowledge that there are some things which men can do better than women, and other things which women can do better than men.

The real question is—What are the things? It is a question which can be answered only by an appeal to past performance.

But it is usually objected that women were given no opportunity in the past, and that, in consequence, their abilities are unknown and to be revealed only by future performance.

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The answer to this is—first, that their not taking opportunity is in itself a part of the record of their ability; and secondly, that as a matter of fact a sufficient number of women in the past have taken opportunity, and that from these we can judge their abilities quite clearly. It is only necessary to consult any good historic tables to find in them the names of many distinguished women, and also to find that their abilities have not in the least been confined within the usually accepted limits.

So it may be worth while to consider the past performance of women in the activities which go to make up civilization: in music, in the graphic arts, in literature, in science, in religion and philosophy, and in the life of affairs, business, and action.

Music is, by general agreement, the most abstract of the arts. It appeals purely to the emotions, is constructed in a manner-akin to mathematics, and is less touched by utility than any of the other arts. The great musician is usually deaf and blind to all interests except his own. He lives in a world of sound.

Yet music is a very popular art. For many generations it has been a 'polite accomplish-

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ment,' and many generations of women have been taught the rudiments of the art. Most music-teachers are women, and many public performers. Men have, on the other hand, been rather diverted from musical training. A boy needs to show a very evident desire before he is taught to play the piano; and in many parts of America any such activity is regarded as effeminate, unworthy of a real boy.

Yet there are no great women musicians. All the great composers were men; and in this, which is the heart of music, women have never risen above a respectable mediocrity. In spite of generations of training, the heights of music are unscaled except by men. Music is apparently a man's art, and though Saint Cecelia was a woman, her disciples are men.

In painting, sculpture, and the graphic arts the case for women is a little better, but not very much so. Some elementary training in art is part of the education of most girls, and is omitted from that of most boys. Sketching is quite a female habit and, like music, is effeminate in a boy; yet how many great women painters or sculptors can we reckon—Angelika Kauffmann, Madame Lebrun, two or three more, and these not of the very highest rank.

The great creative artists are all men. Our

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art-schools are full of women. They earn their living in fashion-drawing, pattern-designing, illustration, and all the less important branches of the graphic arts; some of them paint pictures, and they have every opportunity to show their artistic talent. But all the great painters, sculptors, and designers to-day, as in the past, are men. Creative ability in the fine arts is a manly virtue.

It has often been claimed that architecture is a suitable occupation for women, particularly domestic architecture and interior decoration. We are told that a woman knows better how to run a house than a man, and therefore is better qualified to design one.

A woman can run a house if she is taught how; but these claimants forget that if a girl is to undergo the same professional training as her brother, in order to become an architect, she will have neither more nor less knowledge of how to run a house than he has. Interior decoration is a minor branch of architecture and hardly to be separated from the larger problems. A certain number of women have been trained as architects, for the profession is quite open to them; but so far they have made no mark. They apparently fail in design; for architectural design is, like music, a very ab-

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stract art. We must remember that Sir Christopher Wren, one of the great architects of the world, was a mathematician before he was an artist.

The case for women in literature is a great deal better. There are many able women prose-writers, though very few poetesses. Sappho is the only woman for whom a place in highest Olympus has been claimed. Mrs. Browning, Jean Ingelow, Miss Rossetti, and Mrs. Hemans were talented ladies, but no one would claim for them a place among the immortals. In prose we have one or two names of the highest,—Miss Austen, the Brontës, George Eliot,—and a large number of lesser ones.

A rough list taken from Nicol's *Historical Tables* gives, between A.D. 200 and A.D. 1882, of women prominent in art, two; in music, none; but in literature, thirty-eight. Some of these were novelists, as Mrs. Oliphant, 'Ouida,' and Miss Edgeworth; but the greater number were essayists and writers on contemporary life.

It is in the least abstract forms of literature that women shine—in descriptions of and comments on life and society.

In the whole field of art we must therefore conclude that women are inferior to men in imagination, intuition, and the abstract quali-

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ties. These qualities are what distinguish all the highest creative art. Lacking them, though women may do good work in the less exacting and more practical branches of art, they will go no further. The great artists will always be men; Art is a manly virtue.

This conclusion is not in agreement with the popular view, but that cannot be helped. The popular view is not based on any knowledge of art.

In science women have done little. Madame Curie is, indeed, the only woman in modern times who has shown great ability in scientific research. The same applies to religion and philosophy. There are no women philosophers, and Mrs. Eddy is the only woman who has ever founded a religion.

Surely there is cause for thought in this. Pure science, philosophy, and religion are alike in that they are all highly abstract activities. Scientific research is, of course, concerned with actual material, but it is pursued in an atmosphere free from any trace of utility, or of concern with human society.

The scientist is concerned with pure knowledge only. He neither knows nor cares what use man may make of his researches. They may end in supplying bandits with bombs and

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motor-cars, or in supplying armies with poison-gas; his business is simply to investigate nature, so far as he can, and to tell the truth, as it appears to him. He is not aware of consequences, or of utility, in so far as he is a scientist.

The philosopher similarly is concerned with pure thought. His thought when published, may result in a revolution, but he is not concerned with this. The scientist and the philosopher have no concern with the application of their knowledge; the one investigates matter, the other thought, in the search for pure knowledge.

This investigation calls for a very high degree of imagination, and in this the philosopher and the scientist are akin to the artist; but these very qualities of abstraction and imagination would seem to render such activities uninteresting to women.

The relation of women to religion is a most interesting point. Before the coming of Christianity women took an important and prominent place in the classic religions. In Asia Minor high priestesses controlled great cults with elaborate rites and large endowments—positions which must have called for high organizing and executive power. In Greece the Del-

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phic Oracle was delivered by a priestess, and in Rome the Vestal Virgins were more than nuns—they were a state institution. How then does it come about that the great world-religions, Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, and Mohammedanism, give so small a place to women?

The answer seems to be that the great religions are all abstract and mystic in thought, and that these qualities have prevented women from rising in them. The classic religions had very little of mysticism, though we find mystic doctrines in the later philosophies. The early Christian Church held at first a simple doctrine of ethics and brotherly love, and while this lasted we find that women took a large part; but as the mystic doctrine of unity with the Divine began to gain ground, as the mystic communion of the saints and the highly abstract doctrines and philosophies of the developed church came to the front, so women fell back.

Buddhism is a highly mystic religion, in which the soul seeks eventual absorption in the Divine, through repeated incarnations. Mohammedanism, though at first a fairly material religion, rapidly became permeated with mysticism; and that is an atmosphere in which woman's thought does not seem to flourish. A few women have been great mystic disciples,

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as, for instance, Saint Theresa, but never mystic leaders.

The one religion, or sect, of the present day which was founded by a woman is Christian Science. It is a practical religion, devoid of mysticism both in doctrine and in practice.

The influence of women in religion is, in general, to lessen the mystical content and to increase the social and ethical value.

In the preceding remarks I have tried to put forward fairly the position of women in the fine arts, pure science, philosophy, and religion. In these activities women have certainly had less discouragement than in the life of action, if we may call by this term the life which centres round business, politics, trade, and society. For some generations the fine arts have been regarded—particularly in America—as suited to women, and their failure to take a high place in them is the more remarkable.

It is sometimes urged that women have been so universally held down that they could rise in nothing; but that is surely an overstatement. Men of genius have very frequently been held down in their first efforts to express themselves. Fathers have not always appreciated the first

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artistic strivings of their sons, and have very frequently insisted on their entering some quite prosaic occupation. Keats was trained as a druggist. Suppression was the lot of men of genius as well as of women, but it failed. If unfavorable circumstances were incapable of suppressing men of genius, it is not open to us to claim that under easier circumstances women of genius have failed to show themselves. And in art matters women have, for fully a century and a half, been better trained than men.

We must conclude that the fine arts are not really suited to woman's mind, and that imagination, intuition, and the love of pure knowledge are manly attributes.

In the life of action women have certainly had less opportunity than men, yet, after literature, there are more distinguished women in this life than in that of art. Some of them are among the greatest characters of history. Queen Elizabeth, the Empress Irene, Catherine de Medici, Florence Nightingale, the Empress Catherine of Russia, and Joan of Arc were women of very different characters, but they were all great organizers, great in action. They take a place in history beside the greatest men of their type.

Joan of Arc is one of the great characters of

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all history, and her greatness is due not so much to her visions—plenty of men have visions—as to her exceptional power of acting on those visions, and of organizing the defeated people of her country. Queen Elizabeth was an organizer. Her greatness was due to her power of selecting ministers and of uniting them in action.

The world of action is one which men have always tried to keep to themselves. Women have never been encouraged to enter it, yet, by force of character, they have done so.

The more we consider woman, the more we must acknowledge her organizing power. The management of a household, that traditional sphere of woman, is organization. It is no light matter to arrange a little community of a man, a woman, two or three children, and a servant, so that all their different wants shall be satisfied with the least friction on an insufficient income; yet that feat is accomplished every day by women.

In France, the wife is more especially the organizer and manager of the small business. In a little baker's shop it is the man who bakes the bread—he is the producer; but it is his wife who sells it—she is the distributor and gives a social value to the man's production.

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Women themselves acknowledge this, though probably unconsciously; for in the recent expansion of woman's work they have not sought employment in the arts for which they were supposed to be so well fitted, but have gone into business, organization, and education.

Women make excellent clerks and managers; social work is largely in their hands, and is almost entirely a matter of organization. They have also entered the medical profession with success; and this is a social activity rather than a scientific one.

The fact is that the distinguishing character of those occupations which women have chosen for themselves is their social quality. This of course involves organization, since society is an organization. It also involves utility.

We have seen that the abstract arts are peculiarly suited to men; we may suspect that the practical and social pursuits are equally suited to women. As has already been noted, many of the women authors were writers of memoirs, of comments on society; and woman now appears as the gregarious genius. She is at her best when working with her fellow citizens on useful schemes of social organization or improvement.

This is not a new idea. It has already been

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noted by various writers on American society, and the 'practical' nature of the American people has been attributed to the influence of women. If it is true, a comparison with societies in which women's influence has been small should give results.

The civilizations of Asia have always suppressed woman. She has been confined to the harem, veiled, secluded, and reduced as far as possible to a puppet for the amusement of man, her sole serious duty the raising of children.

Corresponding to this, the characteristics of Asiatic civilization have been lack of sustained energy, lack of organization, lack of practical qualities. The characteristic of Asiatic thought is abstraction, the characteristic of Asiatic religion is mysticism. This is the result of suppressing woman, and of giving man a free rein.

In America, on the other hand, women are really in control of the social and civilized life of the community. American civilization is known for its intensely practical character, its desire to get things done, without always considering the ultimate result. American religion has lost its mystic element, and has become a series of movements for the regeneration and reform of society. It has largely abandoned

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faith for good works. Is this the result of suppressing man?

The Oriental saint is holy because holiness is a good thing in itself. He seeks to lose himself in the Divinity. The Western saint is a reformer. He seeks to devote himself to the improvement of his fellow men. The Western saint is devoted to his brother, but the Eastern is devoted to God.

It is easy to see that both extremes are to be avoided. The fanatical devotee is as useless and as disagreeable as the fanatical reformer; but they do seem to represent the two extremes of religion, the Eastern and the Western.

It is noteworthy also that the only organizations in America which retain any trace of mysticism are men's organizations—the Roman Catholic Church and the Freemasons.

So we have grounds for claiming that the end of a civilization too much controlled by men is impractical abstraction, that of one too much controlled by women, utilitarian materialism. After all, man and woman were made to live together, and to contribute their respective qualities to a common fund. Where either predominates, the result will be a one-sided, imperfect culture; and where each contributes his weak-

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est quality, the result will be—dare one suggest modern America?

It would be easy to multiply examples which support this view. The Germany of the philosophers and musicians was also the Germany of the Hausfrau. Classic Greece secluded her women and was a land of philosophers and artists. Europe, we may believe, owes her greatness to the balance of man and woman. There abstract thought, art, and pure knowledge—those manly virtues—have been balanced by the society-forming, utilitarian instincts of women. It is proverbially the woman who holds the home together.

It is very easy, of course, to carry this argument too far. We may be able to draw broad distinctions which will be, in the main, true when applied to men or women in the mass, but only exceptional individuals will show these characteristics distinctly in themselves. There are manly, artistic women, and feminine, executive men. It is when they come to work together in numbers that the peculiarities emerge.

The boy and his sister are really very like one another, and the trend is so slight that it may often be broken down by training—especially by the training of the boy. And it is in this that one danger lies.

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There can be little doubt that many of the great pioneers in industry have owed their success, not to executive powers, but to artistic powers turned into an executive channel. The building-up of a great business requires imagination, and the great business-builders have been men.

But the good name of a country depends eventually not on the records of its business or on the tale of its trusts: it depends on the contribution which it makes to human thought. This is an old truism. But how many of our business magnates are spoiled artists? How many have gained the world at the loss of their own souls and of the soul of their country.

But is this altogether their fault? At a recent meeting of a woman's club, the statement was made, with pride, that ninety-eight per cent of education in North America is in the hands of women. This means that practically every boy in the country is, during his most impressionable years, being trained to woman's ideals. He is, it is true, probably revolting against them, but his manly qualities are being suppressed. Indeed, he is being taught to consider them as the peculiar field of women. The virtues held up to him as manly are the primitive, elementary virtues of courage, loyalty, and the

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like. Now these are admittedly very important virtues, but they are virtues common to both men and women. Brave and faithful women are just as common as brave and faithful men; indeed, for utter devotion, it is doubtful if men can stand beside women.

These are not the peculiar manly virtues or qualities at all. The imaginative virtues cannot be taught by women and the first step in the emancipation of man must be the education of boys by men.

Not only have the woman teachers failed to train men as men, but they have brought the whole teaching profession into disrepute. The boy comes away from school only vaguely conscious that his mental needs have not been met, but perfectly aware that he despises the schoolmistress. He transfers this to the whole teaching profession, and is thereby rendered almost incapable of ever learning anything beyond the practical needs of his business. He is certainly made impervious to any real culture. In the East, where the teachers are all men, they are highly honored; in the West men teachers are ridiculed. They are ridiculed because they are said to be lacking in 'practical' qualities, because they are wrapped in abstract,

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useless knowledge; in fact, because they have the minds of men.

It has been reported that the European or American missionary in China is handicapped in his work because he lives in a comfortable house. 'This man cannot be a holy man, or a great teacher,' says his unconverted audience; 'he is too rich!'

In the West, however, poverty is almost the only real offense. What we need here is the possibility of honored poverty. It need not be carried too far, but we need the possibility of a man taking an honored place in society in spite of his not being wealthy. At present a poor man may be honored by the few who know his genius; but if he is to exercise real influence on his fellow citizens, it is well for a man to be wealthy.

It is often claimed that the lack of pure intellectual life in America is due to the traditions of the 'pioneer life.' The hardships of backwoods life, we are told, left no time for thought or art. But in China or India, poor men live lives of abstract thought—it may not be the best abstract thought, but it is thought. The peasant arts of Russia and the Levant prove that poverty is no bar to fine art. But we soon knock all that nonsense out of them here.

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Besides, after all, the backwoods are a thing of the past, and the present characteristics of American life are comfort and conventionality.

America has, in fact, a thoroughly feminized society. It does not really matter very much to-day whether women do or do not have the vote, or practise as lawyers, or manage businesses. These things are all being done by woman-trained men, and a few real women among them will make very little difference. The characteristics of the American world, its love of activity, its desire to do things, its social and gregarious 'convention' habit, its reform habit, its scorn for ultimate principles, pure knowledge, and art—these are the weakest qualities of woman, and they are the qualities of which many American men are proud. For, naturally, in acquiring the feminine qualities the men have acquired the weakest ones. They are as incapable of acquiring the strongest ones as the women are of acquiring those of the men.

These qualities have led to material prosperity in the past simply because America has been able to import the work of men from Europe. But they are rapidly leading to intellectual death.

For this the men are to blame. Women are perfectly justified in taking every opportunity

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and in insisting on their right to every opportunity. The men have left to them the intellectual and artistic culture of the country, and, if they have failed to produce any culture worth having, it is not their fault. They cannot, and that is all there is to that.

The men have neglected their duty. They have left undone those things which they ought to have done, and it is not fair for them to bring forward the old excuse which Adam made to Eve. They are the only people who can supply the elements now wanting in the culture of this continent. From their ranks must come the scientists, the artists, the poets, and the thinkers who alone can gain for the country an honored name. And just at present they are not doing anything.

It is, unfortunately, necessary to add that America, in this connection, must always include Canada.

AMERICA'S DEMOCRACY OF
BAD MANNERS

CHAPTER X

AMERICA'S DEMOCRACY OF BAD MANNERS

ELIZABETH ROBINS PENNELL

THE longer I live in my own country the more I agree with Whistler that the surface is a very good place to keep one's manners. The manners that go deeper may be welcome in an emergency, but they are no great help for ordinary occasions. It would no doubt be agreeable to meet a polite rescuer in a railway smash, or a shipwreck, or a fire, or any of the innumerable accidents modern civilization exposes us to. But we may never have need of his services, while in the wear and tear of every day we rub up against people whose want of manners adds enormously to our discomfort and shatters our joy in life. Perhaps, on the subway, many of the men who square their shoulders, crook their elbows and knees, and drive me before them into the car or out of it, would push as strenuously to my aid in a collision. But I would risk having to take care of myself when the crash came if, in return, I could be treated

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with a shadow of courtesy in so simple an adventure as a journey from Brooklyn to Manhattan.

The efficient person of our time would, I know, dismiss good manners as useless in a money-making age. But it is precisely because of their uselessness that they are of such importance, and it is only to-day that man has ceased to think so. At the very dawn of his existence he began to cultivate the superfluous, the useless, as the most worth-while thing in life. It was certainly for no useful purpose that he endured torture to cover his body with unmarketable designs, distorted his ears and nose with unsalable ornament, twisted his hair into highly unremunerative pyramids and spikes and tufts, loaded his arms and legs with rings that impeded his movements. Nor could utility have been his motive when he gave up raw food for baked and boiled meats, a trouble to prepare and no better cure for hunger; when he scratched lines and curves on his pots and bowls, quite as practical without them; when he wove his baskets into patterns of no service whatever; when he adorned the walls of his cave with drawings and carvings for the sake of nothing more indispensable than pleasure to his eyes. And, to complete this evasion of the

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useful, he was at the same time encumbering the business of living with an amazing elaboration of ceremonial, of surface manners, which for years and centuries it was one of his chief duties to improve, to polish, to beautify. Indeed, so absorbed has man hitherto been in his pursuit of the useless that by the manners, as well as the art, in fashion at any stage of history we can judge the degree of civilization attained.

To-day, however, thanks to modern progress, we have discovered the folly of the useless, and by our want of manners we reveal the civilized heights to which we have climbed. We have got far beyond even the worldly philosopher, who prized easy good breeding as a cover to easy light morals. We would rather flaunt our "vice" than bother to conceal it under a cloak of politeness. The doctrine of a later cynic, that Manners are more important than Religion, is for us as hopelessly out-moded. Our one concession, or weakness, is in our attitude towards the past, which we still like best to remember for the very manners we disapprove of unreservedly in the present.

It is curious, but a fact, that, no matter what we may ask of our contemporaries, of our heroes of other generations we demand those

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“high canons of behavior” which they owed to their cult of the useless. King Arthur and his Knights would lie buried in dusty chronicles had they not shone so resplendently in the light of chivalry. The Quest of the Holy Grail would be forgotten had Sir Galahad been churlish and a boor. I fancy that, for one who can recall the political events of Queen Elizabeth’s reign, thousands know all about Sir Walter Raleigh and his cloak; that, for one who can tell the names of conqueror and conquered in *The Lances* by Velasquez, a dozen could describe the courtesy of their meeting. The French nobility may have deserved the French Revolution, but because in jail and on the guillotine they did not lose the courtliness of their rank, our sympathy goes out to them rather than to their jailers and executioners. I have yet to learn that Washington and the leaders of our Revolution were lacking in heroism because they were gentlemen in the old, no longer valued, sense of the word. Nor is our admiration for Grant and Lee the less because they, too, set an irreproachable example of courtesy in conqueror and conquered. Surely there would be less tenderness in our regard to Chaucer’s Knight and Don Quixote, for Sir Charles Grandison and Colonel Newcome, for a whole host of other heroes

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of romance had they not been such "veray par-fit gentil" masters of the art that makes human existence something more than a struggle for the survival of the fittest.

But I have to look no further back than to the dignified presence of my father in his walks abroad to realize that respect for the ceremonial of life was still strong in his generation. And I myself feel almost as remote as the cave-woman, so misrepresented in our best-sellers, when I recall my own training, and the Convent where politeness was as essential a study as catechism and arithmetic, and where I endured unspeakable agony at Sunday morning's politeness Class when called upon to curtsy and to bow, to go in and out of a room with grace, to pick up the handkerchief dropped for the purpose by another agonized child, while the assembled nuns and pupils watched my failures with disheartening disapproval. It was not an agreeable study but, if I had my way, there would be a Politeness Class in every kindergarten, school, and college in the land.

The present generation is too engrossed in more urgent studies to support me in such a scheme. In the principles of progress, not politeness, it must be trained if it would succeed, and progress as defined to-day is based

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on business, not manners. Modern common-sense forbids any clinging to customs and habits that do not pay. If earlier standards distract thought and steal time from business, they must go, and sentiment over their going is unworthy a practical people. Man would not have been such an unconscionable time getting anywhere if he had not turned from the straight path to run after the Turveydrops of deportment and to dawdle with the useless.

To arrive is the aim of modern life, and not to hustle is not to arrive, and there is no hustling and therefore no arriving for the truant who loiters to play at politeness. It would be folly to expect a man to go to the subway with any knight errant notions, any tomfool courtesousness for the other man less spry than himself or the woman less strong. He goes to get his train. If to get it he must knock aside everybody on the stairs to the station, drive a way through the crowd already on the platform, fight like a tiger for standing room in the car, stumble on everybody's toes, bang hats down over the eyes, and tear open the cloaks of people fighting as fiercely to get out, what difference so long as he is there—arrived—triumphant after the fray. No ungirt loins, no unlit lamp, no silly parlor tricks for the brave who

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would come out on top in the civilized battle of life. Neither are women, who now have their rights, to be kept off the top if they know it. The Amazons could not have outdone them in the subway rush hours. To my terror, I have watched them form in line with a cry of "Push, push, push!" and charge the packed humanity inside, and had there been an inch for me to fall in, I would not be here now to record their valor.

When I first came back to my own country after years of absence, I wondered to see stalwart youth and hulking Negroes filling every seat of trolley and subway, while I, an elderly woman, stood hanging to my strap. In my young days, though then better fitted for the ordeal, I was never allowed to stand so long as there was a man to offer me a place. But I wonder no longer. To-day, the average woman to whom a man offers a seat promptly takes it but seldom looks at him, more seldom thanks him. "You didn't say thank you," one woman in a French Caricature reproaches another, just given a seat by a Parisian who has not out-lived his manners. "No, indeed," is the answer, "when a woman is too polite she seems to show a lack of breeding!" The French, if the *Metro* is undermining their manners too, at least have

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the grace to supply a reason. We have as little time to argue about politeness as to practise it.

Were the manners of the subway exceptional I might deplore them as the result of New York's methods of transit and hope for a remedy in legislation. But they are not exceptional; they are typical. The chief end of the American, out of the subway as in it, is to get there, even if not sure where *there* is, and no such trifle as good manners shall delay him. He rushes through his meals with the same dauntless impetuosity as through his daily journeys to and from work. Dinner, not so many years since a ceremony, is for him a scramble from the moment the waiter thrusts the glass of ice water in front of him until he is served with the irrepressible bowl into which he has not a second to dip his fingers. And it is not solely in restaurants that speed is his standard. An admirable dinner, admirably served in a private house, can be ruined by the need of bolting it and arriving at the bridge table or the opera or the dance or the lecture on the way to something else. In every country, during centuries, how to behave at table was the serious study of wise and learned authorities who made it part of the whole Duty of Man—or

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Woman. But I foresee the day when instruction in the art of snatching a "bite" and running will suffice for the American educated in the business of arriving.

The policy of push is observed as scrupulously in the open street where, if all unknowingly, I impede the progress of three or four citizens abreast just behind me; in one second with a violent jolt they dispose of me,—should I land in the gutter, that is my concern, not theirs. To leave a shop or hotel or any big building by one of those horrible revolving doors I must dash for a vacant niche, or somebody dashes in ahead of me, twirling the door with such rapidity that the miracle is how I get in or out again alive, though all this hustling may lead to nothing more pressing than the hustler's chat with a friend in the middle of the pavement, waiting to be hustled aside in his turn. And there are no such words as "Pardon" or "Excuse" or "Sorry" in the vocabulary of those for whom every movement, every action has become the outward expression of the inward belief in the Gospel of Hustle.

If not to say "Thank you" is a sign of good breeding, we can congratulate ourselves on being the best bred of all nations. In the leisurely days of an unprogressive past, "Thank you"

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was one of the first phrases taught to the young. Who of my generation does not remember the gentle, reproachful voice asking, "And what do you say, my dear?" for the gift received, or the grown-up's condescension kindly meant if abhorrent to a healthy child. True, it is a convention that can be driven to an extreme, as in the England I first knew, where you were thanked for what you did not do or want as well as for what you did. I used to laugh at the "None to-day, Madam? Thank you, Madam!" On the whole, however, I like it better than the other extreme of no thanks at all. But the little superfluous phrase is too severe a drain upon patience and breath now that new reasons for thanking have multiplied.

At one not very distant time, next to no self-respecting American would accept a tip. To-day those of our critics are right who tell us that we outdo every other country where tipping is the custom. But there is a difference. The American, more particularly the American who dates from yesterday and who in his own home would be profuse if not groveling in his gratitude, accepts a tip as his due, not as a concession requiring the bowing and scraping unbecoming in a free people. Tip the shoeblack, the hairdresser, the manicurist, and good form

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does not allow them to notice it in your presence. In restaurants the waiter, when he can, turns his back as his tip is left on the table. Tipping degrades those who give and those who receive, but it would be less sordid if tips were taken graciously, especially as failure to tip does not pass exactly in silence.

Not only the tipped but all classes are reluctant to betray appreciation or as much as consciousness of a kindness which, if conventional in form, calls the more for the once indispensable conventional return. I write my congratulations or my sympathy or my interest to friends or strangers on the appropriate occasion, and an acknowledgment is so unusual that I prize it as the scientist might some rare specimen of an extinct species. I send the information, which it happens I can supply, to an unknown correspondent who asks me for it, and there, as far as I am concerned, the matter rests, so that to the exceptions,—and there are exceptions,—I feel as grateful as they say they are to me.

And the sense of obligation is perishing with the formula for recognizing it. Few authors however modest, few artists however great, have not received demands for the use of their work with an assurance that their names will

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be mentioned, or with a reminder of the advertisement they will get, as if it were the beggar who conferred the favor. When nobody thanks any more, no chance will remain for the retort courteous, old-fashioned but not without charm. "You are welcome" may have been another unnecessary waste of breath, but it was unquestionably prettier than the stony stare or the scornful "Yah, keep the change!" now the correct rejoinder to a belated "Thank you."

"Good morning" and "Good evening" also are doomed, mere refuse to be flung into the garbage can of decayed manners. They linger here and there. Indeed, I have had it in my heart to wish I might never hear "Good morning" again when, in a friendly hotel, it has reached its fifteenth repetition between my first leaving my room and my getting back after breakfast. But I would rather repeat it a hundred times in an hour than dispense with it altogether. The occasional lapse into English manners which I could not help on my return home after over thirty years in London, misled me at first into saying "Goodmorning" or "Good afternoon" or "Good evening," according to the time of day when I went into a shop and when I left it. But I was quickly cured by the young ladies behind the counter, who were

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too startled by my guileless salutation to return it. Let me in fairness add that suspicion of my sanity did not prevent their supplying my wants, and that they often were so amiable as to be calling me "Honey" or "Dearie" before I got through. Now I have learned better than to startle them by any un-American show of politeness.

And yet it seems to me that something is lost in this shrinking from ordinary civility. Whoever has been in France knows what a charming ceremony shopping there becomes with the inevitable "*Bon jour*" and "*Au revoir, Monsieur*" or "*Madame*," as the case may be. The French share my experience when they come to America and quickly drop ceremony in the process of being Americanized. In an American town I need not name, I was one of the earliest patrons of a little French *Boulangerie*, led there by the excellence of *Monsieur's* *brioche*s and the pleasantness of *Madame's* manners. At the end of a month, though *Monsieur's* *brioche*s were as good, *Madame's* "*Bon jour*" and "*Au revoir*" had been done away with forever.

Passing, too, are the old "Madame,"—"Ma'am" in good American,—and "Sir," or appropriate title, inseparable from "Yes" and

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“No” so long as courtesy was in fashion. Lord Chesterfield, an authority, was seldom more insistent than when he urged respect for their union to his probably bored and certainly irreclaimable son. But Lord Chesterfield and his contemporaries lived too soon to enjoy the blessings of democracy, when everybody is as good as everybody else and isn’t going to let anybody forget it. The true democrat wears familiarity as a badge. “Pops” is quite ceremonious enough for the man with gray hair, and “Girls” for women of any age,—“Hurry along, girls!” the policeman bids the elderly ladies hesitating at the crowded crossing,—while any odd epithet serves so well for the average citizen that he might have been Gilbert’s model for the nameless Hunter of the Snark. To-day’s authorities on deportment condemn by their example all symbols of subservience in speech as in manners. Sir Maurice Low, when in New York for the Democratic Convention, found New York’s manners immensely improved in the last twenty years, so that I am appalled to think what they must have been as he remembers them. I can hardly imagine them more careless than they are.

There is no desert without its oasis, however, and I do not forget that in our wilderness of

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bad manners there are certain groups of people and occasional individuals with whom the old code of politeness persists. But little straws show which way the wind blows even among the most conservative. The man who in a lift still takes off his hat when a woman enters will puff his cigar smoke into her face. Or, though he remembers to rise if every woman in the room is not seated and to stand at attention by his wife's chair as she sits down to table, his elegance of deportment seldom accompanies him as far as the street. The young girl, who still dips a curtsy to her elders, has otherwise adopted manners that serve to point a moral in pulpit and press despite the zeal with which both are dropping their own. Nobody believes any longer that to be civil with ease is to make one's self beloved, that good breeding goes hand in hand with common-sense and good nature. To be uncivil with ease is now the one way to get on, and to get on the one thing to bother about.

Personally, I prefer the older faith. As a citizen of our great democracy, I am ready to admit that every other citizen is my equal. Why then should he seek to impress his equality upon me by an uncivility which I pray Heaven I may never be tempted to show him in return?

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Why, to declare his independence, must he cast off every vestige of decency and decorum?

I can see no gain in democracy if good manners are incompatible with its doctrines, if behavior as well as work must be adapted to the standard of the weakest, if we must all be leveled down to no manners at all by the weight of equality. To the courtier who was the fine flower of the Italian Renaissance, "Freedom under the Law was the beginning and end of good manners." To the men born equal of our day, freedom without bad manners is an empty farce. "Be rude to one another" is the golden rule, and unfortunately not only are our manners corrupted by the new canons of behavior, but the fundamental things of life as well. The contagion has spread to art. It has spread to literature, emancipating verse and prose alike from form and restraint. It has spread to the theatre, exalting cheap humor and vulgar display at the expense of a noble dramatic tradition. It has spread to government, the people's chosen representatives wrangling and snarling like dogs over a bone. It has spread to religion, the men who undertake to interpret the Word of God shrieking hell and damnation to each other like angry fishwives. Day by day the art of living withers and fades, leaving us

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to face existence, unadorned, in all its nakedness. To doubt the blessings of democracy may savor of heresy, but it is not easy to lose without regret that older code which made men free and equal by the gracious Law of Courtesy.

THE END



PRINCE GEORGE HOTEL
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WHAT IS CIVILIZATION BY

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